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10
DAYS TO GO
BEFORE CHRISTMAS

OPINION METER

This week's poll:

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INSIDE



Food Drive

Hard Rock Café Saipan launches a food drive to benefit Karidat.

LOCAL...Page 7



Holbrooke, 69

U.S. diplomat Richard Holbrooke dies. He was 69.

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IN FIRST TWO MONTHS OF FISCAL YEAR

Only half of expected income came in

■ **Cash shortage still delays payroll even with 16-hour pay cuts, unpaid holidays**

■ **Partial payroll again this week**

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Acting Finance secretary Connie Agulto and two other key department officials told lawmakers yesterday that the government collected only about half of the projected \$11 million in monthly income in the first two months of fiscal year 2011.

Department of Finance's Eloida Macaranas, center, addresses lawmakers while acting Finance secretary Connie Agulto, right, and Payroll's Eloida Macaranas, left, look on at a hearing on government payroll and finances held by the Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee yesterday afternoon.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO



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'Collect \$4M in outstanding student loans'

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Lawmakers called on the CNMI Scholarship Office yesterday to be more pro-active in collecting some \$4 million in unpaid student loans since 2006, but they also vowed to ensure that funding for scholarship will not be reprogrammed.

However, the assurances may have come too late because funding for the CNMI Scholarship has dwindled from \$4 million in fiscal year

See **COLLECT** on **Page 4**

New FM station spices up the airwaves

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

A new FM radio station is spicing up CNMI airwaves with authentic island music from all parts of the world—whether it be Chamorro/Carolinian, Hawaiian (Jamaican-Hawaiian), roots reggae, you name it.

"KKMP," a product of a husband-and-wife tandem, is the

first locally owned and operated radio station in the CNMI, with a global reach via www.cnmiradio.com.

It broadcasts on 92.1FM on Saipan and Tinian, and on 1440AM on Rota and the Northern Islands.

Blue Continent Communications, owned by former representative and government chief

See **NEW FM** on **Page 4**

From left, KKMP 92.1FM and 1440AM on-air host "Mama Lulu" Lucy Blanco, administrative assistant Moira Olaitiman, vice president Gary Sword and his wife Rosemond Santos, president of Blue Continent Communications, inside their new "red" main studio on the second floor of the Liberty Store building in Garapan yesterday morning.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO



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SHEFA posts 48 percent drop in applications for spring semester

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Applicants for the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance dropped 48 percent from 900 in the fall semester of 2010 to 470 for the spring semester of 2011.

SHEFA administrator Henry Hofschneider said yesterday the total is not final until the board of directors releases the number of students who are eligible for scholarship grants.

Applications for the spring semester were due on Dec. 1.

For new applicants—both on-island and off-island—complete requirements and documents are due on Feb. 28.

Saipan Tribune learned that the 470 applications this fall semester include both on- and off-island applicants. Of that number, 110 are new applications while 260 are ongoing scholars.

According to board member Jose Leon Guerrero, many of the applicants want to pursue degrees through online courses and programs. SHEFA, he said, must look into these online programs to ensure that students will get proper credits and hours for their studies.

Board member Maggie Camacho said the significant decline in the number of students wanting to go to college is a concern. "It seems that many of our students do not want to go back to school...or enroll for college. I think we need to know the factors behind this drop because this is a concern."

Hofschneider said yesterday that changes in the amounts SHEFA hands out to scholars may be implemented this spring semester due to the low revenue

collections from poker fees.

"Because of the funding availability for SHEFA, we may adjust the amount of awards we provide to scholars such as field of study and incentive. This option is way better than suspending the program or limiting the number of recipients for each program," he said.

SHEFA, which gets \$3 million yearly for its programs, offers grant-in-aid, field of study, and incentive financial assistance. Of the three, only grant-in-aid is provided to all eligible students while the other two have separate criteria.

Grant-in-aid off-island scholars are given \$2,000, while on-island recipients get \$1,200. Grant-in-aid scholars of the Northern Marianas Trade Institute get \$800 each.

For the priority field of study award, SHEFA provides \$1,500 to both off-island and on-island recipients. Only select courses or degrees are provided this assistance.

The incentive program awards \$2,000 to recipients. They are required to maintain a GPA and must be full-time students.

BOE ELECTION NEXT MONTH

'HQT achievement highlights PSS, BOE accomplishments'

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Board of Education chair Lucy Blanco-Maratita considers the strides made by the Public School System in complying with the HQT (highly qualified teachers) standard as its biggest accomplishment in the last couple of years.

"HQT is a big issue. I believe in that standard in ensuring quality education for our students. Moving along with HQT is phenomenal," she told *Saipan Tribune* after last week's board meeting on Capital Hill.

The CNMI has until July 31, 2011 to comply with the federal mandate that all its classrooms must be staffed with highly qualified teachers only. At present, 75 percent of PSS classroom teachers are already considered highly qualified.

The board adopted the HQT requirements in 2006 in an effort to uplift the quality of education in the CNMI. To be deemed highly qualified, a teacher must have a degree, a valid teaching certificate, and must have passed two Praxis tests.

Blanco-Maratita also credited the good leadership and management skills of Education Commissioner Rita A. Sablan, enabling PSS to meet its goals and missions.

"I am extremely proud of what we have and what we have achieved. But I know we have to do more for our kids," she said.

Besides the HQT accomplishment, Blanco-Maratita said the board was also successful in getting the trust of the federal government, which provides millions of financial assistance to CNMI children and their educators.

PSS received over \$50 million in total federal assistance for education last fiscal year. These included the \$32 million state fiscal stabilization fund; \$6.5 million energy grant; \$6.5 million American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's consolidated grant; and \$8 million job education grant.

Despite the meager local budget allotted for education, Blanco-Maratita said that PSS and the board were able to deliver on all expectations.

"It was initially very challenging...but as we progressed and the board came together, we really focused on what is important to our students. I really had an enriching three years experience [on the board]," she added.

The board was supposed to elect a new set of officers last week but members deferred the election to next month.

Blanco-Maratita said she is willing to serve as chairperson again if this is the wish of the members. She has been the board chair in the last three years.

Blanco-Maratita emphasized, though, that she also believes in the capabilities of her colleagues, describing each as equally qualified, willing, and able to take the lead as board chair.

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Frustration mounts as today's House session postponed anew

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

Today's session of the House of Representatives was postponed anew, frustrating many members who are concerned that critical bills are being held up

by the fourth postponement in about a week.

Shortly before office hours closed, acting Speaker Felicidad Ogumoro (Cov-Saipan) issued a memo postponing today's 10am session "until further notice."

Ogumoro did not cite a reason

for the postponement in her one-page memo, but minority members said yesterday it may be because the leadership is afraid that minority leader Diego Benavente (R-Saipan) would seize power as the new speaker if a motion for reorganization is

made during a session.

Speaker Froilan Tenorio (Cov-Saipan) is off-island, and this could tip the scale in favor of those supporting Benavente for speaker.

Rep. Trenton Conner (R-Tinian) said there's no rationale for the session's cancellation again.

"I'm disappointed because now the money that I wanted to appropriate for the sickly and scholarship for the next semester will be delayed. Why should the people suffer because of our inability to conduct sessions?" he asked.

Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan) said yesterday if at least 11 members decide to go ahead with a session, then the officers

will have to honor that.

Most minority members' disappointment has been on the failure of the House to act on revenue-generating bills, other legislation and communications that have been piling up. Lawmakers also are unable to introduce their local appropriations bill that would fund medical and scholarship programs.

The leadership held a meeting yesterday afternoon. One of those who attended, Rep. Fred Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan), said "committee chairmen need more time to get their bills out of committee and prepare for the session," when asked for the reason behind the postponement.

Rep. Ray Tebuteb (R-Saipan) said the cancellations have been hampering critical matters, including scheduling and compliance with the Open Government Act. Rep. Ray Yumul (R-Saipan) also reiterated his disappointment, citing critical measures that are piling up.

"I keep rescheduling meetings and putting off other matters to prepare for the regular session, only to receive a notice that it's cancelled," he said.

The first session was set for Dec. 7, but was rescheduled for Dec. 9, then for Dec. 13. This has been rescheduled for today, Dec. 15, but has been postponed again.

Jurors begin deliberation in 'ice' trafficking case

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Superior Court jurors began deliberations yesterday in the case against two men on trial for "ice" trafficking and they are expected to resume deliberations today, Wednesday.

Prosecution and the defense lawyers for suspects George T. Manglona and Ignacio A. Deleon Guerrero Sr. completed their closing arguments yesterday at noon.

Assistant attorney general Russell Lorring said they presented 30 pieces of evidence and called seven different witnesses to prove that Manglona and Deleon Guerrero are guilty of trafficking and possession of a controlled substance and conspiracy.

Lorring said Deleon Guerrero sold "ice" as clearly indicated in his signed confession to detectives.

Lorring also cited testimonies of witnesses and documents showing how the Drug Enforcement Task Force managed to purchase "ice" from Deleon Guerrero using an informant.

Lorring said the Task Force members also found "ice," "ice" paraphernalia, and marijuana from Deleon Guerrero's house in Chalan Kanoa.

He said over 20 police officers participated in the investigation of the case. These officers, he said, did not conspire to plant evidence against the defendants.

Lorring cited detective Sean White's testimony that they received information from a "cooperating source" that Deleon Guerrero and Manglona were selling "ice" at Leon Guerrero's house. The suspects allegedly used a tin house at Deleon Guerrero's property for the use of "ice" users.

Lorring said the informant

kept saying during testimony that he can't recall because "that man was terrified. And he was terrified for good reasons."

Joseph Norita Camacho, lawyer for Deleon Guerrero, said White admitted in his testimony that he did not see the "ice" transaction.

"There were procedures that were not followed. There were steps that were not taken," Camacho said. He also cited inconsistencies in the testimonies of other witnesses.

Assistant public defender Michael Brown, counsel for Manglona, also pointed out that the informant could not recall having any transaction with Manglona and Deleon Guerrero.

"We have an informant who can't recall anything," the defense lawyer said.

Superior Court associate judge Ramona V. Manglona is presiding over the case.

Airport master plan, new ARFF vehicles eyed for FAA funding

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
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REPORTER

The airport master plan for Saipan, Tinian, and Rota are at the top of the list of projects that the Commonwealth Ports Authority will seek funding assistance from the Federal Aviation Administration this fiscal year 2011.

Other projects that CPA wants funded by the FAA include the purchase of four more vehicles for the CPA's Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Department and the creation of an updated airport layout plan in compliance with FAA standards.

CPA officials disclosed to *Saipan Tribune* that FAA has already agreed to provide funding for four ARFF vehicles, two of which will be assigned to Saipan and one each on Rota and Tinian.

For the Tinian airport, CPA is asking funding aid for the relocation of its ARFF building and access road. FAA is currently reviewing this project.

CPA has also asked for funding so it could procure a sweeper for the Francisco C. Ada-Saipan International Airport to replace one that no longer works. The sweeper keeps runways, taxiway, and aprons clear of any debris.

For the Rota airport, FAA is being asked to fund the replacement of the perimeter fencing.

Ports authority officials report that the agency is on track on all its projects on three islands, majority of which are federally funded.

Among these are the comple-

tion of the taxiway conversion and water catchment closure at the Saipan airport and the rehabilitation of the airport's main runway.

Saipan Tribune learned that the FAA has also approved the change orders for the airport's emergency generator upgrade and the completion of the public address system project.

Progress was also noted in other projects, including upgrades

to the airport's restrooms; high roof drainage improvement; renovation of the commuter terminal; ARFF training facility improvement; and ARFF building expansion.

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ONLY

From Page 1

The severe cash shortage is causing delays in payroll for non-critical government employees, despite the 16-hour cut and the unpaid holidays, which are already embedded in the fiscal year 2011 budget.

Agulto said government employees in non-critical positions will again not receive their paychecks on Friday and will have to wait until next week.

Only federally funded and those in critical positions such

as police officers, firefighters, doctors and nurses will receive their checks on time.

Projected revenue for fiscal year 2011 is down to \$132 million—an average of \$33 million a quarter or \$11 million a month.

During a Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee hearing led by Sen. Jovita Taimanao (Ind-Rota) yesterday afternoon, Agulto said they collected only some \$5.1 to \$5.2 million each in October and November.

If the trend continues, the government's projected \$33 million in collection from taxes and fees

for October to December could end up at just \$15 million.

However, because the deadline for tax payments for the first quarter is end-January, the collections can still go up.

Thus, Agulto said, despite the initial collections, they project only some \$3 million in shortfall for the first quarter of 2011.

Acting press secretary Teresa Kim said acting Governor Eloy S. Inos is projecting up to \$6 million in shortfall in the first quarter.

"He's hoping that collections will improve in the second quarter. The first quarter is a death

valley period when collections are traditionally lower," she said.

Kim said the austerity measures such as the 16-hour cut have been insufficient, so the Fitial administration will continue to find ways to cut costs that include reducing the number of government employees "but only as a last resort."

Sen. Frank Cruz (R-Tinian), Rep. Tony Sablan (R-Saipan) and other lawmakers reiterated during the hearing that Finance should strengthen its enforcement and collection efforts to be able to collect more, to avoid payless paydays even when em-

ployees are already subjected to a 16-percent pay cut per pay period and unpaid holidays.

Agulto, Treasury Division's Antonette Calvo, and Payroll's Eloida Macaranas took turns answering lawmakers' questions on payroll and other financial problems of the CNMI government.

Rota resident director of Finance Stacy Atalig, who was also at the hearing, asked whether Finance central office could notify Rota ahead of time whether to expect timely payroll or not.

Gabriel Evangelista, resident director Finance on Tinian, said the payroll delays have also af-

fected Tinian employees.

Taimanao, committee chair, asked Finance officials to notify agencies beforehand whether payroll will be delayed or not.

She also said Finance should promptly answer their telephones because a lot of calls go unanswered, especially to inquire about payroll.

Macaranas, during the hearing, said Inos, who oversees government finances, plans to implement "direct deposit" payroll next year.

Finance officials said the figures they have presented are preliminary.



HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota), right, addresses CNMI Scholarship Office administrator Merissa Rasa, foreground, while other lawmakers look on during a Senate Committee on Education public hearing on the scholarship program yesterday.

COLLECT

From Page 1

2006 to only \$2 million in 2011, based on data from CNMI Scholarship Office administrator Merissa Rasa.

Rasa was among those who testified at a public hearing held by the Senate Education Committee chaired by floor leader Pete P. Reyes (R-Saipan) yesterday morning.

The CNMI Scholarship Office earlier said scholars have paid only some \$800,000 or 20 percent of the \$4 million they owe the CNMI Scholarship Office, under a memorandum of agreement that they have to return home to work once they graduate from college or their scholarship will be converted to a loan that they need to repay.

The Senate hearing, which was also attended by some members of the House, in-

tended to get to the bottom of the delays in the issuance of scholarship checks and identify ways to improve the program, among other things.

Lawmakers took turns until almost 1pm to ask witnesses that included Rasa, members of the CNMI Scholarship Board led by chair Carol Hosono and member Kodep Ogumoro-Uludong, Northern Marianas College Student Services dean Leo Pangelinan and acting Finance secretary Connie Agulto.

Agulto said delays in the release of scholarship checks were caused by the shortage in government cash collection. Unlike the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance or SHEFA, which gets funding from poker license fee collection, the CNMI Scholarship Office gets direct government appropriation.

Hosono and Rasa said due to a decline in funding, students' scholarship under the Educa-

tional Assistance program has been reduced from \$1,800 to \$1,200.

Senate President Paul Manglona (Ind-Rota) and other senators asked Rasa whether the office has been able to track down all CNMI students who have availed of the scholarship program and whether they have returned or repaid the CNMI Scholarship Office.

Rasa, in an interview after the hearing, said the \$4 million is only up to 2006, and involves only those that were able to inform the CNMI Scholarship Office about their status.

Senators asked whether the CNMI Scholarship Office could be more aggressive in tracking down the scholars, and compile a list of those who were able to complete their studies, their specialty, where they are now, and whether they are working or not.

Rasa said the office has been

trying its best, adding that a lack of personnel is also hampering the office from tracking down all scholars.

Of the \$2 million funding for the CNMI Scholarship Office, almost half of it goes to some 50 students under the Honors Scholarship Program, each of whom receives up to \$15,000 a year.

A little over half of the program funding goes to some 900 students who have been granted the EAP, each of whom receives \$1,200.

While some senators called for the reduction of the Honors Scholarship Program benefit to be able to fund more students in the EAP, the Senate president said this should not necessarily be the case. Manglona said if the students in the Honors Scholarship Program are studying in the best schools and they are excelling, the more should they receive scholarship funding.

CLARIFICATIONS

- In the Dec. 10 article "Grant seeks to provide opportunities for library staff," the correct project name is Library Education for the US Affiliated Pacific. The lead on this project or grant administrator is the University of North Texas, in partnership with Pacific Resources for Education and Learning. Funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, LEAP aims to help 23 Micronesians obtain a master's degree in Library and Information Science.
- The correct contact number for the 3D hotline number is 989-HELP (4357) and 898-SAVE (7283).

NEW FM

From Page 1

prosecutor Rosemond Santos, hit the airwave on Dec. 9, with visiting Interior Assistant Secretary for Insular Areas Tony Babauta and Gov. Benigno R. Fitial among the first guests on-air.

Santos' husband, businessman Gary Sword, is the company's vice president and first conceptualized the idea of putting up a new radio station five years ago.

"KKMP" is the fifth FM radio station that Sword has established in the Pacific. The first one was in American Samoa in 1999, followed by stations in Western Samoa, Palau and the Marshall Islands in 2005.

"I thought this type of island music was lacking and we also need a locally owned and locally operated radio station that will give opportunity to local artists and will serve this community," Sword, who is also a musician, told *Saipan Tribune* in an interview at the radio station's main studio yesterday morning.

He said they invested some \$200,000 to put up the station.

When one walks into the station on the second floor of the Liberty Store building in Garapan, one is drawn to a John F. Kennedy poster with his famous quote, "One person can make a difference, and every person should try."

"And we hope we're making a difference," Sword said, as he pointed to the wall posters.

The station's "red" room is its main studio, while the "yellow" room is the newsroom, and the "green" one is the production room.

"Is the color combination familiar?" Sword added.

Since hitting the airwaves on Thursday at 6am, "KKMP" has been visited by local musicians who were able to showcase their talent live on-air.

Sword said as a locally-owned and operated station, they can easily put local artists

on-air without having to ask for corporate office approval.

"All you need to do is call us," he said. KKMP can be reached at 233-1440 to 43.

KKMP's grand opening will be on Jan. 1, from 5pm to 9pm.

"It will be on 1-1-1," said Santos, adding that they plan to close off the road in front of the building and invite local musicians.

Besides music, KKMP also airs talk shows, which are Santos' turf. They also carry public service announcements, and invite government and private sector guests to talk about issues and community service programs.

Sword said government officials will also be given airtime, including the governor every Saturday, the mayors of Saipan, Tinian, Rota and the Northern Islands on Mondays, and even a link to the Washington, D.C. office of Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan.

The businessman/musician has planned a lot of programs for KKMP, which is on its way to become a one-stop center for entertainment and public service. The show also starts with reflections.

"I think the more we speak about how we can improve the CNMI, the more we can help improve it," said Sword, who is originally from American Samoa.

Santos, who will go back to private law practice next year, said she and her husband are thankful to those who helped them put up this radio station.

Besides Santos and Sword who are the president and vice president of Blue Continent Communications respectively, the other board members are: secretary/treasurer Gordon Marciano, and members Rep. Ray Yumul (R-Saipan), Louisa Yamada-Garon, and Joe Limes.

Their on-air hosts, or the "DJs", include "Mama Lulu" or Lucy Del Rosario, and "Big Daddy G" or Gordon Marciano. Completing the list are "C.O.D.," who is Donovan Castro, and "Raskila" or Andrew Moses.

OAG: Weight of evidence vs rape suspect overwhelming

The weight of evidence against Alfred P. Hocog, one of the suspects in the kidnapping and rape of a 16-year-old student in Kagman, is overwhelming and is enough to retain the \$100,000 cash bail for the suspect, according to a prosecutor.

Assistant attorney general Brian Gallagher said the Superior Court has already found probable cause that Hocog committed

the crime and the overwhelming evidence against him militates against any bail reduction.

Gallagher made the statement to oppose Hocog's motion to reconsider the court's bail order. Associate Judge David Wiseman had placed the motion under advisement and has yet to issue a ruling.

Gallagher said Angel Jess Santos, one of Hocog's own

co-conspirators, has identified Hocog, and has agreed to testify against this defendant.

"In return for his cooperation, this defendant's co-conspirator [Santos] shall receive a sentence of 40 years incarceration, of which he will serve between 10 and 20 years (hardly the 'sweetheart deal' described by counsel for one of defendant's co-conspirators)," he said.

On Aug. 16, 2010, Wiseman granted Hocog's motions for a reduction of his \$100,000 cash bail and for the appointment of his parents to act as third-party custodians.

Wiseman reduced the bail amount to \$75,000 and allowed a 10 percent deposit, together with the property bond.

Wiseman, however, later reconsidered and re-imposed the

\$100,000 cash bail.

Hocog asked the court to reconsider the order.

Gallagher said the bail amount set by the court is not sufficient to ensure Hocog's full cooperation with the conditions directed by the court.

"When facing a life sentence and overwhelming evidence of his guilt, \$7,500 of his parents' money will do little to encourage

this defendant to comply with the court's order. Moreover, his incentive to flee is strong," he said.

Hocog and his co-defendants, Joseph C. Camacho Jr. and Ivan Jones Castro, will go on trial on Jan. 3, 2011.

Police said the victim was walking toward Kagman High School when the suspects beat her up, took her to Tank Beach, and raped her there. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

OAG ignored calls, requests to visit client at detention unit—NMPASI

The Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc. is claiming that the Office of the Attorney General repeatedly ignored its calls and requests to visit a client and to investigate other violations at the Kagman Juvenile Detention Unit.

NMPASI counsel Matthew J. Holley said that he called the Juvenile Detention Unit in July 2010 to try to visit NMPASI's client and investigate violations at the facility.

He was told to contact assistant attorney general Tom Schweiger for the arrangements, he said.

"On three occasions in the months of July and August 2010, the undersigned left detailed messages on Schweiger's work answering machine. Schweiger failed to return a single message," Holley said.

NMPASI is now suing Department of Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Melvin Faisao for allegedly denying it access to the Juvenile Detention Unit.

Faisao, through the OAG, is seeking to have the complaint dismissed, saying the unit does not currently have any individuals with developmental disabilities and with mental illnesses and it has not done so during his tenure as DCCA secretary.

In an amended complaint it filed last week, NMPASI enumerated a list of juveniles with disabilities at the Juvenile Detention Unit.

In that complaint, Holley said that, on Aug. 27, 2010, he mailed and faxed a letter to Schweiger, first informing him that he has neglected to return a single message and to contact NMPASI about the matter.

Holley said the letter outlined the statutory authority permitting NMPASI to enter and investigate the Juvenile Detention Unit.

"Like the phone messages, Schweiger never responded or even acknowledged the letter or fax," he said.

On Sept. 13, 2010, Holley said, after talking with Juvenile Detention Unit supervisor Jaclyn Mendiola, and per her request, he sent her an email outlining NMPASI's request and the law allowing NMPASI to enter and investigate the facility.

After getting no response, Holley said, he sent another email to Mendiola on Sept. 16, 2010. He said Mendiola responded via email, informing him that she is referring the matter to Faisao.

That same day, Holley said, Faisao sent him an email, simply stating to call the OAG and

"ask to speak to the responsible/designated AAG."

Holley said he responded by asking for the specific name of the "responsible/designated" AAG as numerous attempts had already been made to contact Schweiger.

The following day, Holley said, Faisao replied by stating "as it was indicated earlier in my previous email correspondence and re-directed or re-iterated again...call and ask..."

That same day, Holley said, he called and verified that Sch-

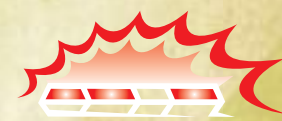
weiger is the designated AAG for the Juvenile Detention Unit.

Subsequently, Holley said, he sent a final email to Faisao explaining that no more attempts to contact Schweiger would be made in light of unanswered messages, letter, and fax.

Holley sent a 10-day notice to Faisao to make the proper arrangements or action would be taken through the court system. He said Faisao responded by stating he had forwarded the email to OAG. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)

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By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Health Care Professions Licensing Board has adopted an emergency order allowing a physician assistant to temporarily

DUE TO LACK OF DOCTORS ON TINIAN

Health care licensing board OKs emergency order

THC's lone physician, Dr. Priyantha Wijayagunaratne, resigned effective Dec. 1. However, he was on sick leave since Nov. 12, leaving the hospital without a doctor

since then.

The board's emergency order is now published in the Commonwealth Register.

The licensing board disclosed that the Tinian clinic had asked for the emergency order to exempt THC physician assistant Juan B. Pangelinan from standard regulations so he could provide health care at the center through remote supervision.

The board said the Commonwealth Health Center, through deputy secretary John Tagabuel and Public Health Secretary Joseph Kevin Villagomez, both agreed to assign physicians who will remotely supervise Pangelinan from the hospital.

This supervision will be provided by CHC emergency room doctors Marty Rohringer, Trent Scheibe, Greg Kotheimer, and Shirish Balachandra.

"The board finds that it would be unfair to the people of Tinian to restrict Mr. Pangelinan from practicing at THC merely because the center does not presently have a physician. This order provides authority for remote supervision from Saipan," the board stated in its emergency order.

Pangelinan, a licensed physician assistant, may work as a licensed professional on Tinian based on the order. He is ordered to submit a new practice agreement to address the requirements of the order.

He is also authorized to prescribe schedule III through V medications as needed and will inform his supervising physicians on Saipan. He is also authorized to review and sign chart notes and prescriptions within three weeks.

Pangelinan may also prescribe no more than a 21-day supply of schedule III-V medications. For refills, supervising physicians must co-sign prescriptions.

The order, according to the board, addresses an emergency situation coming under the specific "immediate and grave danger to the public."



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MELL SPRINGLEAF	013E	12/4 Sat	12/2 Thu	12/2 Thu	11/30 Tue	11/27 Sat	12/10 Fri	12/6 Mon	12/5 Sun	11/28 Sun	11/28 Sun	12/6 Mon	12/10 Fri	12/12 Sun	12/14 Tue
MELL SILOSO	014E	12/11 Sat	12/9 Thu	12/9 Thu	12/7 Tue	12/4 Sat	12/17 Fri	12/13 Mon	12/12 Sun	12/5 Sun	12/5 Sun	12/13 Mon	12/17 Fri	12/19 Sun	12/21 Tue
MELL SENTOSA	048E	12/18 Sat	12/16 Thu	12/16 Thu	12/14 Tue	12/11 Sat	12/24 Fri	12/20 Mon	12/19 Sun	12/12 Sun	12/12 Sun	12/20 Mon	12/24 Fri	12/26 Sun	12/28 Tue
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MELL SILOSO	015E	1/1 Sat	12/30 Thu	12/30 Thu	12/28 Tue	12/25 Sat	1/7 Fri	1/3 Mon	1/2 Sun	12/26 Sun	12/26 Sun	1/3 Mon	1/7 Fri	1/9 Sun	1/11 Tue
MELL SENTOSA	049E	1/8 Sat	1/6 Thu	1/6 Thu	1/4 Tue	1/1 Sat	1/14 Fri	1/10 Mon	1/9 Sun	1/2 Sun	1/2 Sun	1/10 Mon	1/14 Fri	1/16 Sun	1/18 Tue

Inbound from Asia	Voyage No.	ETA Guam	ETA Saipan	ETA Yap	ETA Koror	ETA Davao	ETA GenSan	ETA Cebu	ETA Hongkong	ETA Kaoshiung	ETA Busan	ETA Yokohama	ETA Manila	ETA Singapore
MELL SPRINGLEAF	013E	12/18 Sat	12/19 Sun	12/19 Sun	SKIP	12/22 Wed	12/24 Fri	12/26 Sun	SKIP	12/31 Fri	1/1 Sat	1/6 Thu	1/25 Tue	1/9 Sun
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MELL SENTOSA	048E	1/1 Sat	1/2 Sun	1/2 Sun	SKIP	1/5 Wed	1/7 Fri	1/9 Sun	SKIP	1/14 Fri	1/15 Sat	1/20 Thu	2/8 Tue	1/23 Sun
MELL SPRINGLEAF	014E	1/8 Sat	1/9 Sun	1/9 Sun	1/11 Mon	1/12 Wed	1/14 Fri	1/16 Sun	SKIP	1/21 Fri	1/22 Sat	1/27 Thu	2/15 Tue	1/30 Sun
MELL SILOSO	015E	1/15 Sat	1/16 Sun	1/16 Sun	SKIP	1/19 Wed	1/21 Fri	1/23 Sun	SKIP	1/28 Fri	1/29 Sat	2/3 Thu	2/22 Tue	2/6 Sun
MELL SENTOSA	049E	1/22 Sat	1/23 Sun	1/23 Sun	1/25 Mon	1/26 Wed	1/28 Fri	1/30 Sun	SKIP	2/4 Fri	2/5 Sat	2/10 Thu	3/1 Tue	2/13 Sun

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Moving the world



Hard Rock Saipan operations manager Reynaldo Perez, left, hands the Christmas invitations to Karidat executive director Angie Guerrero during the launching of their partnership for the Imagine-Karidat Food Drive Campaign in line with the Imagine There's No Hunger Campaign on Dec. 13.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hard Rock Saipan kicks off its 'Imagine' food drive campaign

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Hard Rock Café Saipan launched Monday a food drive that would benefit Karidat Social Services.

The "Imagine-Karidat Food Drive Campaign" is a partnership between Hard Rock and Karidat as part of the "Imagine There's No Hunger" movement.

Imagine There's No Hunger is Hard Rock International's global campaign that helps raise awareness and funding to fight childhood hunger and poverty around the world.

The campaign concept is based on John Lennon's 1971 hit that envisions a world of peace and free of poverty.

Operations manager Reynaldo Perez said that Hard Rock Saipan teamed up with Karidat to support of the CNMI's social service

organization's various projects.

Karidat runs three programs: Victims Advocacy, which helps victims of domestic violence; Victims Hotline where callers receive both immediate consultation and referrals for follow-up help; and Guma Esperanza, which provides shelter for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking.

"We have always wanted to help Karidat and I think this campaign is just perfect timing for the holiday season," Perez told *Saipan Tribune*.

Perez encourages members of the community, and even tourists, to donate any canned goods that can be dropped off at Hard Rock Café. Last day of donation is on Dec. 23.

All donated goods will benefit some 30 families that are currently being assisted by Karidat, he said.

There will also be a special Christmas party to be hosted by Hard Rock for Karidat families on Christmas Day. "We want them to experience what it feels like to get the rock star treatment on Christmas," said Perez.

He also urged the public to purchase Imagine items at Hard Rock for a limited time only. These Lennon-inspired merchandise include the John Lennon Artist Spotlight T-Shirt, a charity bracelet, and a pin.

Perez said 15 percent of the proceeds will benefit WhyHunger, which supports grassroots organizations that bring about self-reliance, economic justice, and equal access to nutritious and affordable food.

For more information about the food drive or the Imagine campaign, call Perez at 233-7625 or visit Hard Rock Saipan's Facebook account.

Cabinet member files for bankruptcy

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's special assistant for political affairs Dolores Mendiola Aldan has filed a bankruptcy petition in federal court.

Aldan, also known as Dolores M. San Nicolas, filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy in the U.S. District Court for the NMI on Monday.

Under a Chapter 7 petition, most assets of the debtors are liquidated as quickly as possible to pay off his or her debts over a period of three to five years.

Aldan listed 12 creditors that she owes a total of \$329,226.07.

Among her biggest creditors are Personal Finance Center, from whom she owes over \$93,000; GC Service Limited Partnership Collection Agency in Houston, \$35,587.07; Marian Milne, \$34,000; and Wells Fargo Financial, \$28,000.

The other creditors are Gold's Gym, from which she owes \$1,600; Countrywide Homeloan in California, \$32,000; MGC Mortgages in Texas, \$31,759; Student Loan Corp., \$28,780; attorney Mike White, \$4,200; attorney Joshua Berger, \$18,000; SARS Co., \$15,800; and \$6,500 for a Labor case.

Aldan claimed to have personal property totaling \$50,500, including \$50 cash at hand. She

did not list any real property.

Aldan, a former commissioner of the Department of Corrections, claimed to have

an average monthly income of \$1,951.08. She estimated her average monthly expenses at \$2,047. (*Ferdie de la Torre*)



Northern Mariana Islands RETIREMENT FUND

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC, Division 9, §9910, Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos, through the NMI Retirement Fund Board of Trustees/Workers' Compensation Commission/Group Health & Life Insurance Trust Fund, are hereby giving notice that the Board of Trustees will hold its Regular meeting Friday, December 17, 2010 at 9:00 a.m. at the NMI Retirement Fund Conference Room, Saipan.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS

- Call to Order
- Roll Call
- Adoption of Agenda

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

III. REPORTS

- Report of the Chairman
 - Communication
- Report of the Administrator/Deputy Administrator
 - Communication
 - Status of Investment
 - Accounting Report
 - NMI Retirement Fund
 - GHLTF
 - WCC

IV. LEGAL MATTERS

- Reports of the Legal Counsels and Administrative Hearing Officer
 - Report of the Board Counsel
 - Report of the Hearing Officer

V. OLD BUSINESS

- NMIRF Case No. 10-009

VI. NEW BUSINESS

- Proposed Amendment to Administrative Regs relating to Education Service Credit
- Fund's Annual Goals

VII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

VIII. MISCELLANEOUS

- Announcements
- Next Meeting

- Adjourment

/s/ SIXTO K. IGISOMAR
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Society for Human Resource Management
(SHRM) CNMI Chapter

Presents

HEALTH CARE REFORM Major Changes for the CNMI

Tuesday, December 21, 2010
Saipan World Resort
Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands

Conference Agenda

7:30 – 8:30 am	Registration & Refreshments
8:30 – 8:40 am	Opening Remarks Eric L. Plinske <i>President, SHRM CNMI Chapter</i> <i>Branch Manager, StayWell Saipan, Inc.</i>
8:40 – 9:00 am	Perspectives on Health Care Reform Katherine Dote, SPHR <i>State Director, SHRM Pacific Council (Guam & CNMI)</i> <i>Director of Human Resources, Guam Marriott Resort & Spa</i>
9:00 – 9:30 am	The Importance of Health Care Reform for the CNMI The Honorable Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan <i>Congressman for the CNMI, United States House of Representatives</i>
9:30 – 10:00 am	Impact of Health Care Reform on Public Health & Medical Referral ■ Joseph Kevin Villagomez, Health Secretary <i>CNMI Department of Public Health</i>
10:00 – 10:15 am	15 Minute Break
10:15 – 11:30 am	Major Changes in the Health Insurance Industry <u>Panel Speakers:</u> ■ Frank Campillo, Health Plan Administrator <i>Calvo's SelectCare Health Plans</i> ■ Donald B. Davis, President & CEO <i>StayWell Guam, Inc.</i> ■ Francis E. Santos, Associate Administrator <i>StayWell Guam, Inc.</i> ■ Gina Ramos, Chief of Staff <i>TakeCare Insurance Company</i> ■ Jerry Crisostomo, Plan Administrator <i>Moylan's NetCare Life & Health Insurance</i>

TOPICS

What are the major insurance benefit changes? ■ Is health insurance required? What are "grandfather rules" and how do they affect you? ■ What will be the impact on rates? What happens in 2014? ■ Questions & Answers

11:30 – 12:00 noon	Regulating the CNMI Health Insurance Industry Sixto Igisomar, Acting Secretary of Commerce/Insurance Commissioner <i>CNMI Department of Commerce</i>
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12:00 – 1:15 pm	Lunch
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1:15 – 1:45 pm	Changes in the Medicare Program Augustus Loste, Acting District Manager <i>U. S. Social Security Administration – Saipan Office</i>
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1:45 – 2:15 pm	Impact of Health Care Reform on the CNMI Medicaid Program Helen C. Sablan, Administrator <i>CNMI Medicaid Program</i>
----------------	--

2:15 – 3:30 pm	Perspectives from CNMI Private Health Care Providers <u>Panel Speakers:</u>
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- Dr. Norma Ada, President
Medical Associates of the Pacific
- Thelma Cabrera, Operations Manager
Marianas Medical Center
- George Cruz, President
Marianas Health Services
- Natalie Codianne, Pharmacist
PHI Pharmacy

3:30 pm	Summary & Closing Remarks Polly DLG Masga
---------	---

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Christmas carols, goodies for the man'amko

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Aging Center was full of holiday excitement on Dec. 13 and 14, with the *man'amko* listening to Christmas carols and getting grocery items.

Seventeen students of the Special Education class at Kagman High School, along with 13 staff members, sang Christmas classics for the island's senior citizens Monday morning.

Teacher Richard Masiwemai said this is their fourth year to sing Christmas carols at the Aging Center.

"This annual activity is good for both the *man'amko* and the students because it gives them a chance to socialize," he said.

Masiwemai told *Saipan Tribune* that the students, who all love to sing, looked forward to the caroling and practiced for a week.

"I hope the *man'amko* enjoyed it and we look forward to many more visits in the future," said Masiwemai.

Saipan Seniors Advisory Council vice chair Jose Torres extended his appreciation to the students and staff of Kagman High School.

"We're very, very happy that they really made time to come visit here and sing for us. We pray that we will all be healthy so we can still do this in years to come," he said.

Yesterday, each *man'amko* received a bag containing assorted grocery items from Dickerson & Quinn International Distributors.

Grocery items donated by D&Q included sardines, tuna, pasta sauce, milk, and juice. The items were delivered to the center last Friday.

Aging director Rose Mondala admitted she was surprised with the donation. "We don't even do



CLARISSA V. DAVID

Students of the Kagman High School Special Education class don their Santa hats as they sing Christmas carols for the *man'amko* at the Aging Center on Monday.

business with them," she added. Nevertheless, Mondala

thanked D&Q for its Christmas donation. "We're very grateful.

We wish them happy holidays," she said.

...as HANMI hosts Christmas lunch for seniors

By CLARISSA V. DAVID
clarissa_david@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

It is indeed the season of giving, with the Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands sponsoring an early Christmas luncheon for the *man'amko*.

HANMI hosted the holiday luncheon on Dec. 13 at the Fiesta Resort & Spa in Garapan.

Members and officers of the hotel association, led by vice chair B.K. Park of Fiesta Resort, became servers Monday as they gave generous servings of delectable dishes and desserts for the elderly.

"This is our annual Christmas lunch for the *man'amko* to appreciate your support. I wish you all happy holidays," Park told the senior citizens.

Saipan Seniors Advisory Council Teresita Sorroza extended her heartfelt gratitude for HANMI's generosity to the *man'amko* every year.

"We pray that the CNMI will have more visitors to



CLARISSA V. DAVID

Fiesta Resort & Spa general manager B.K. Park, left, leads the officers and members of the Hotel Association of Northern Mariana Islands that served the island's senior citizens during the HANMI-sponsored Christmas luncheon on Monday.

come to fill out your hotels and to do business with the CNMI. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year," said Sorroza.

Aging director Rose Mondala affirmed Sorroza's wish for the member hotels of the orga-

nization.

"We hope this economy gets better so we can be invited more. We want to thank you HANMI for thinking of us again even though the economy is sluggish," said the director.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Dec. 15, 1998

Health-checks law given second look

Following the initiative of the administration, legislators are seriously looking into the mandatory health screening for foreign workers implemented by the NMI government after the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Community ruled that it violated federal laws. Senate President Paul A. Manglona has instructed their legal counsel to review the medical requirement to determine whether the legislature needs to act on the concerns of the local business community over the implication of the EEOC ruling. Earlier, Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio had asked the Attorney General to evaluate the legality of the health screening, but maintained it will remain in an effort to protect the island from communicable diseases.

Bill on MVA board makeup expansion opposed

The Marianas Visitors Authority had opposed a proposed legislation that seeks to increase the number of board members from nine to eleven because the current composition is already enough to respond to the long term plans of the MVA. In a letter to Senate President Paul A. Manglona, Deputy Managing director Vicky Benavente said the current nine board members comprising of representatives from the travel, hotel and tourism related business can effectively organize and coordinate long range plans of the agency. "The MVA board also believes that the current composition of the board accurately reflects the relative economic impact that each island has on the CNMI tourism industry," said Benavente.

Dec. 15, 1999

AGO rejects request to sanction Judge Bellas

The Attorney General's Office has no authority to take disciplinary action against Superior Court Judge Timothy H. Bellas for alleged improper judicial conduct as this is the sole responsibility of the Legislature, according to acting Attorney General Maya B. Kara. It is only through impeachment that Judge Bellas can be removed, suspended or sanctioned due to allegations of improprieties, conflicting duties, extra-judicial and political activities leveled by his arch-critic Rep.-elect Stanley T. Torres. AGO recommended pursuing this matter with the Legislature "so that [it] may determine if the conduct of Judge Bellas which you believe is either illegal or inappropriate merits disciplinary proceedings through impeachment process," said Ms. Kara in a letter to Mr. Torres.

Customs Division boosts drug detection program

In a move to curtail, if not eliminate, the trafficking of illegal drugs in the CNMI, the Division of Customs has recently acquired two Labradors from Australia to assist in drug detection in various ports of entry. The Customs Division has also sought the assistance of Australian Customs Service in the certification, training and maintenance of Labradors under the Australian Customs Service Detect the Dog Program. The dogs are trained to detect cannabis, heroin and cocaine. Since the use of methamphetamine hydrochloride or 'ice' is rampant on the island, the dogs will be trained to search for this type of substance.

Dec. 15, 2000

'Shooting resort' plan worries Teno

In his first public statement on the issue, Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio expressed fear over proposal pending in the Legislature that will seek to establish so-called "shooting resorts" in the Northern Marianas. "I want to see less guns on the islands," he said in a brief response to a question from local and Japanese high school students who sought an audience at the Governor's Office yesterday. But the local chief executive said he would leave it up to the lawmakers to address the divisive issue whether to lift a ban on high-powered guns in the CNMI to accommodate the needs of these proposed resorts.

NMIRF explores Medicare, GHLIP integration

The Northern Mariana Islands Retirement Fund is seriously looking into the possibility of integrating the Social Security Administration's Medicare Program into the local agency's Group Health and Life Insurance Program. SSA Saipan Field Office Manager Michael G. Newman made a strong presentation during yesterday's NMIRF board meeting where he discussed the proposal's capability to alleviate NMIRF's financial status. Mr. Newman said the program would allow NMIRF to save huge amounts if the Medicare Program is incorporated in the GHLIP since it will cover almost 80 percent of patients' hospital bills.

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Keeping it clean

Those hoping that a Democratic Congress and administration would make progress on clean energy this year have been deeply disappointed.

Not only was the House's cap-and-trade climate bill crushed in the Senate by unified GOP opposition, but even a modest bipartisan effort to set a national standard for renewable power generation fell by the wayside. Now, one of the federal government's few existing clean energy programs—grants for wind and solar developers approved as part of the 2009 stimulus package—may end in the coming weeks unless the lame-duck Congress acts.

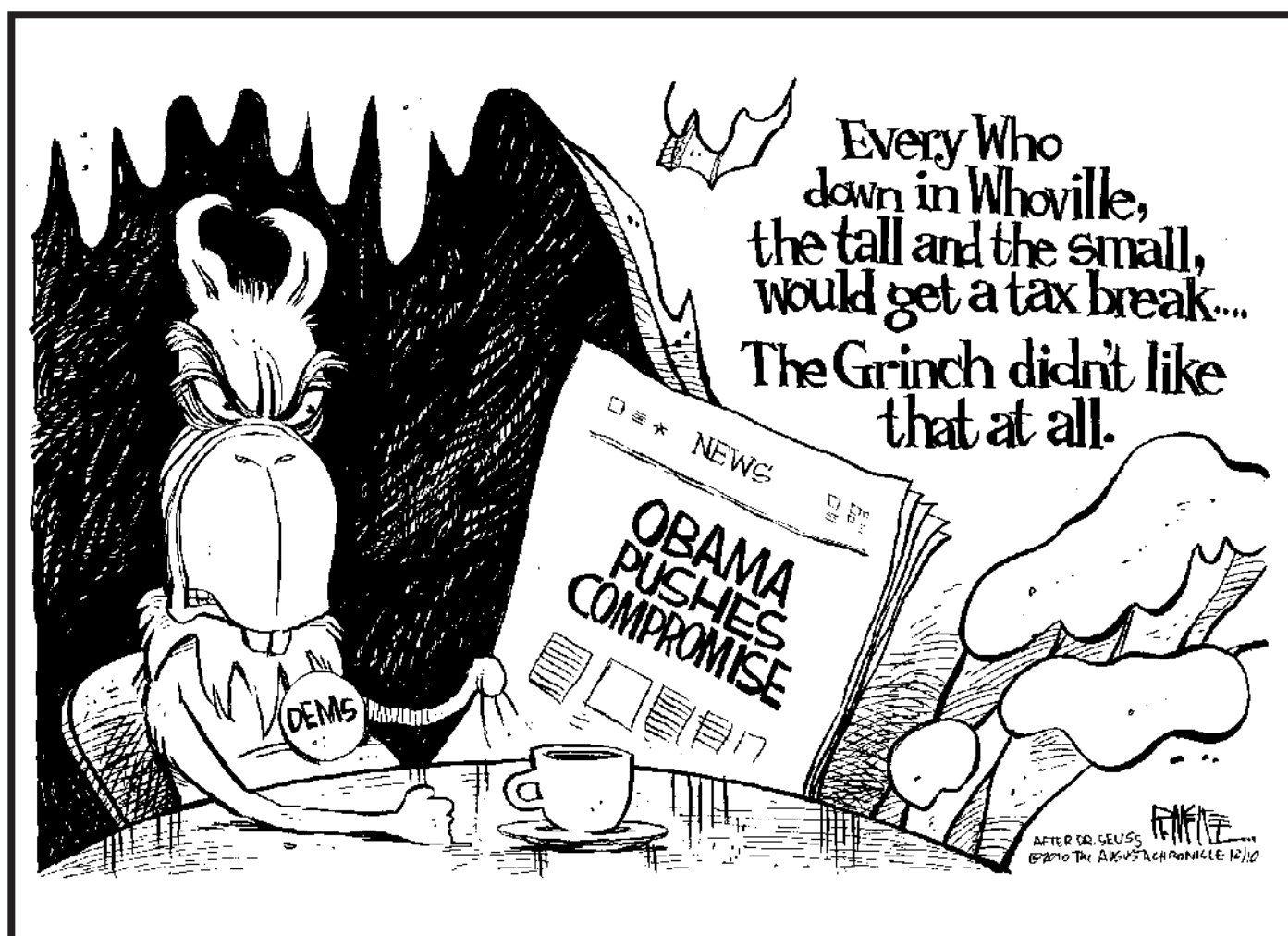
The renewable power subsidies, known as “1603 grants” after the section of the stimulus bill that created them, paid up to 30 percent of the cost of projects breaking ground by the end of this year. Renewable facilities generating a combined 4,250 megawatts (the equivalent of roughly four large nuclear plants) were supported by the program as of March, according to a report by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory; that output is doubtless far higher now. The grants have created thousands of jobs, and helped clean the air and wean the country off fossil fuels. But all that may be about to stop.

Last week Democrats submitted their solution to the problem of the soon-to-expire Bush-era tax cuts, proposing to extend them only for those making less than \$250,000 a year. An extension of the 1603 grants was included in that bill, which stalled after it failed to meet the Senate's 60-vote threshold to avoid a filibuster. When the Obama administration negotiated a compromise that extended the tax cuts for all Americans, the grants were stripped out, apparently because of GOP opposition to a continuation of stimulus programs.

The government already gives a tax credit to developers of renewable energy projects, but after the banking crisis, when investment in such projects dried up, the credit was rendered next to useless. That's why the grants remain so crucial; the investment climate has improved very little, and without the grants it is likely that construction of clean power plants would stall. That would ravage fledgling manufacturers of such components as wind turbines and solar panels, putting U.S. green technology companies at a profound disadvantage to their competitors in China and Europe, where leaders take the threat of climate change seriously.

Both of California's senators are working hard to restore the renewable power grants to the tax-cut package, whose details are still the subject of furious debate. The grants are boosting economies in many red states such as Texas, and GOP senators who cling to the party line aren't doing their constituents any favors. Whatever deal is reached on taxes, the grants should be part of it.

(c) 2010, Los Angeles Times



Website credibility. Website sales

The only way to take control of your life, raise your standard of living and move beyond merely surviving is to create your own unique product or service that you offer to increasing numbers of people in exchange for the things of value that you desire. This simple formula applies to countries as well as people. A self-sufficient economy has its own products or services of value to export to the world. Similarly, a self-sufficient individual has something of value to exchange in the global marketplace. That thing of value is based on your natural talent, skill, or interest—in other words, your passion!

[Excerpt from Websites That Sell]

The key to making sales on the Internet with your website is “trust.” In other words, people will be more willing to make purchases through your website if they trust you. That means that establishing credibility is an essential key to online success.

How do you develop that trust? Well, on the Internet, doesn't have to take months or years to establish trust based on your years in business. There are a few simple yet vital things you can incorporate into your site design to help you do just that. The following are offered by the Stanford Web Credibility Project

1. Make it easy to verify the accuracy of the information on your site. You can build website credibility by providing third-party support (citations, references, source material) for information you present, especially if you link to this evidence. Even if people don't follow these links, you've shown confidence in your material.

2. Show that there's a real organization behind your site. Showing that your web site is owned by a legitimate organization will boost the site's credibility. The easiest way to do this is by listing a physical address. Other features can also help, such as posting a photo of your offices or listing a membership with the chamber of commerce.

3. Highlight the expertise in your organization and in the content and services you provide. Do you have experts on your team? Are your contributors or service providers authorities? Be sure to give their credentials. Are you affiliated with a respected organization? Make that clear. Conversely, don't link to outside sites that are not credible. Your site becomes less credible by association.

4. Show that honest and trustworthy people stand behind your site. The first part of this guideline is to show there are real people behind the site and in the organization. Next, find a way to convey their trustworthiness through images or text. For example, some sites post employee bios that tell about family or hobbies.

5. Make it easy to contact you. A simple way to boost your site's credibility is by making your contact information clear: phone number, physical address, and email address.

6. Design your site so it looks professional (or is appropriate for your purpose). People quickly evaluate a site by visual design alone. When designing your site, pay attention to layout, typography, images, consistency issues, and more. Of course, not all sites gain credibility by look-

THE SAIPANPRENEUR PROJECT

Creating economic success for the CNMI

By WALT F.J. GOODRIDGE

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Walt F.J. Goodridge is author of 16 books including *Turn Your Passion Into Profit*. Walt offers coaching and workshops to help people pursue and profit from their passions. Originally from the island of Jamaica, Walt has grown several successful businesses in the US, and now lives a nomadpreneur lifestyle. To learn more, visit www.passionprofit.com.

ing like IBM.com. The visual design should match the site's purpose.

7. Make your site easy to use—and useful. We're squeezing two guidelines into one here. Research shows that sites win credibility points by being both easy to use and useful. Some site operators forget about users when they cater to their own company's ego or try to show the dazzling things they can do with web technology.

8. Update your site's content often (at least show it's been reviewed recently). People assign more credibility to sites that show they have been recently updated or reviewed.

9. Use restraint with any promotional content (e.g., ads, offers). If possible, avoid having ads on your site. If you must have ads, clearly distinguish the sponsored content from your own. Avoid pop-up ads, unless you don't mind annoying users and losing credibility. As for writing style, try to be clear, direct, and sincere.

10. Avoid errors of all types, no matter how small they seem. Typographical errors and broken links hurt a site's credibility more than most people imagine. It's also important to keep your site up and running.

For more information on how to increase your website's success at attracting, converting and keeping customers, check out “Websites That Sell” at www.passionprofit.com, which features a special chapter on blogging your way to Internet success by Saipan's own Angelo Villagomez

■■■

Note: Where will YOUR passion take you? What sort of life would you live if you could? Find out what's possible. Check out my new adventures on jamaicaninchina.com.

Note: Ever wanted to direct your friends and family to a set of websites that revealed the best things about Saipan? Do what I do: send them to www.bestofsaipan.com!

■■■

Until next week, remember, success is a journey, not a destination!

Send article suggestions, entrepreneur nominations and feedback about this article to walt@passionprofit.com.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Covenant Party vs Republican Party for the good of the CNMI

By **DAVID J. SABLAN JR.**
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

I was asked on a recent visit to Saipan what I thought about the “merger” of the Covenant Party with the CNMI Republican Party, and the governor’s statement that he has always been a “card carrying member” of the “national” Republican Party.

In business, a merger involves two or more companies joining together to form a new single company, taking each company’s strengths and forming a much stronger company to address market demands and changes.

If the intent of the officials of the two political parties is to form a new, stronger, single party, it cannot be a “merger” as defined above. There is no reason to dissolve the Covenant Party if some of its followers want to keep it alive, unless it runs out of followers and fails to win any office seats in elections. But the followers may want to consider joining the Republican Party anyway for reasons stated below.

Just what exactly makes one a “Republican”? The answer lies in the principles of the Republican Party.

Republicans believe strongly in less government in our lives—the best government is the one that governs the least; that the most effective, responsible and responsive government is the one that is closest to the people; in a balanced budget and the use of our taxes to benefit the common good and not just a select few; in less taxation—we should keep more of the hard-earned fruits of our labor; that government should only provide those necessary services that would benefit the community as a whole like public health, education, safety; and public work; in individual entrepreneurship—you are the master of your own destiny—government protect these liberties that offer opportunities and encourage people to excel in their pursuit of happiness and bettering their lives; in the free enterprise system; that the family unit is the strength of the community and should always be protected; in a strong military to protect our rights and freedoms; and not least, Republicans believe in the dignity, sanctity and respect of human life beginning at conception, and will always work toward the preservation of life. Republicans also believe in God, and through Him comes the strength, wisdom, moral foundation, and values to live our lives in the service of our fellow man.

If anyone espouses the above principles, he or she is a Republican and can be proud to say so. You do not need any membership card to confirm your beliefs. There really is no membership requirement,

Strange, colorful fireworks

Pyrotechnics illuminated the evening skies, turning Mt. Tapochau into a perfect silhouette. The tallest hill usually disappears after sunset. This special evening there’s a treat for everyone—fireworks!

It includes the rift between two dueling giants who have since “kissed and said good night.” There’s also the announcement to return to “my party,” a political pirouette that fizzled out like “candle in the wind.”

The reluctant issue that reappears like a two-headed snake is economic paralysis that had the little boys rehearsing when to walk away from toys designed for adults. Gee! It must be fodder for comedy, the beneficiaries solely the so-called political pundits who walk around like land sharks.

Frankly, professional political pundits and the ruling majority know the dire mood of governance, though neatly shielded by self-denial. But a realist will tell you that we need not explore anything beyond the recent non-delegate election where the underdog slammed the entire slate. The GOP came in a distant third. Would rearranging the chairs on the deck of a sunken ship prepare it for the rough seas? A quick glimpse into the proceeding would validate the loss of credibility of the ruling majority as we head into 2012.

You take a cursory review of the barometer on revenue generation. There’s nothing up that alley except for funds trickling in from the U.S. Department of the Interior to assess alternative energy. It’s a good undertaking, though I surmise we’d all be dead from the plague known as “surcharge” and other increases before preliminary studies are done. This, as fiscal disaster, like magma from a volcanic eruption, devours everything on its way. We’re present, witnessing the devastation before our eyes.

The combined external and internal mess at home, coupled with hopelessness in the prospects of securing some form of emergency assistance from Uncle Sam, dims even the joyful bright lights of the holiday season. Be that as it may, I still place my trust in “Felis Navidat.” This too shall pass! It may be protracted but it too shall pass with or without the ruling majority. How do you deny gover-

no application form to fill out—nothing—to consider oneself a Republican. One just has to believe and live the principles of the party as founded by President Abraham Lincoln. Now, some parties require “party members” to register for statistical and record purposes, and that is fine, but it is not a manifestation of your beliefs. Your actions within the guiding principles are what makes you a Republican.

Every state and territory of the U.S., and Washington, D.C., has a Republican Party that is independent of each other. Every state and territorial Republican Party is organized differently. There is no national entity that tells Republicans in each state and territory how to organize themselves, because there is no “national Republican Party.”

All Republican parties, however, have banded together to form a federation, with each electing three representatives to sit on the Republican National Committee, or RNC. There are only 168 members of the Republican National Committee, composed of three members from each state, territory and Washington, D.C. They are the state chairman, the state national committeewoman, and the state national committeeman. Their main focus is to get Republicans elected.

Prior to 2004, the CNMI Republican Party was not part of the RNC. They used the term “Republican” but they were not officially recognized nationally because they did not have sitting members on the RNC—the board of directors of the Republican parties across the states and territories, so to speak.

Beginning in 2000, members of the RNC from Guam and American Samoa initiated a four-year effort to get national recognition for the CNMI Republican Party. A resolution was introduced at the 2004 Republican National Convention in New York City, where over 2,000 delegates from across the United States and its territories voted to pass the resolution to recognize the CNMI Republican Party! This gave the CNMI Republican Party three seats on the RNC for their chairman, national committeeman and national committeewoman. The bylaws of the party had to be amended to include election of the latter two positions, as they were non-existent prior to 2004. And for the first time in history, the CNMI sent Republican delegates to the 2008 Republican National Convention in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to vote for the Republican candidate for the office of President of the United States.

The CNMI Republican Party is the only party in the CNMI that is recognized nationally. They have a say in national Republican politics through its membership on the RNC, and through its participation at the quadrennial Republican national convention.

I believe that Governor Fitial recognizes he needs help from

nance the devastation it must endure from leadership who boasts dismissive arrogance?

As the NMI turns into an unemployment wasteland, families will find it harder to pay for utility surcharge, the family home; family car; food, basic needs for those without entitlement benefits, among other familial devastations. Would city hall intervene to help ease these obligations? If so, is there a plan for this purpose? What’s in store for governance in their stealth plans?

So far, the NMI has been and continues to be in self-denial about the fiscal disaster it persistently ignores by looking the other way. We hear pronouncements about austerity while hiring political stalwarts and granting hefty salary adjustments to the politically connected. It isn’t even willing to settle down to review the must-cut items on its lengthy wish list. But sooner than later it must face the beast and do the rain dance accordingly. Employing the cargo cult mentality as a last ditch public relations stunt would only confirm juggling insanity.

Indeed, it’s difficult deciding not only what to cut, but who to cut and how soon. But both sides of the street on Capital Hill must forcibly learn the ring of the word “cut.” It would become your tool for at least a decade until positive programs based on reasoned policies actually rein in fresh and lasting investments. It’s a matter of fostering confidence and a rock solid sense of organization to repeal regressive policies.

The “feel-good” sanctimonious talk of reunification isn’t going anywhere. The bigger drama is ahead in the midterm election of 2012 where governance will once more demonstrate its disgust with washed-out politicians from traditional parties. *No mas!*

■ ■ ■

More than 40 years ago, I’d walk home with siblings (after serving at midnight Mass) relishing the aroma of local delicacies in the morning air. Smoke billowing from old firewood kitchen says it all: the old folks have been up all night preparing breakfast for the entire clan.

It’s an occasion that begins with the family matriarch and patri-

Washington, D.C. to spur the economy of the CNMI, among other things. He needs to develop closer relationships with members of Congress. He cannot forge those relationships solidly because he is not affiliated with a nationally “recognized” political party, either Democrat or Republican.

Governor Fitial cannot caucus with other Republican governors of the U.S., or with the Democrat governors for that matter, because he is neither a recognized Republican nor Democrat. The Covenant Party is not recognized outside of the CNMI. He is alone, and that is very unfortunate for the CNMI, as their issues before the federal government may not be prioritized as he would want.

CNMI Delegate Gregorio “Kilili” Sablan was elected as an independent but during his first term in Congress, he had to align himself with one of the major political parties recognized nationally. He chose to align with the Democrats. I hope in the new term, which starts next month, he will align himself with the Republicans and stay there. It is unwritten, but you can change your party alliance once, to maintain your integrity and credibility. He has that one chance now to align and remain with the majority party (Republicans) in the U.S. House of Representatives.

But for Governor Fitial, he is without a recognized political identity in Washington, D.C. Since the CNMI Republican Party is the only one in the CNMI that is recognized nationally, it is an obvious choice to join them.

If the governor truly believes in those principles, the CNMI Republican Party should welcome him and the followers of the Covenant Party to strengthen the base of the party. And since the CNMI Republican Party is recognized nationally, and has three members on the RNC, they have the leverage over the Covenant Party to remain unchanged. I really don’t believe the Covenant Party can offer anything of significance in “merging” with the CNMI Republican party. Therefore, the best alternative for followers of the Covenant Party, who believe in the principles stated above, and who want to be part of a nationally recognized political organization, should simply to join the CNMI Republican Party, and that goes for the governor also. If they want to go further and participate in elections and in the business of the CNMI Republican Party, then all they have to do is be active with the CNMI Republican Party apparatus, within the dictates of the organization’s articles and bylaws.

David J. Sablan Jr. is a former chairman (2000-2004) of the Republican Party of Guam.

By **JOHN DELROSARIO**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

DelRosario is a regular contributor to the Saipan Tribune’s Opinion Section.



arch blessing their children on Christmas morning. The traditional kissing of the hand definitely brings a sense of humility as we reset our sails to welcome the New Year. Afterwards, traditional yam doughnut or bread and coffee are served as siblings exchange joyful felicitations and catch up with the latest town gossip.

Nana’s dinner table was the center of our gathering since our toddler days. Yes, I could see the names of siblings scribbled atop her table that were there for decades. The last time I took a glimpse at it, my eyes were welling with tears remembering the memory-filled days we had each Christmas morning sitting around nana’s table, the centerpiece of familial unity.






Those were the hard, golden days in a simple community where we knew everyone by name. It was a community founded on harmony. Communal sharing held us together through thick and thin. We prayed together as the novena for the Niño Jesus began around the neighborhood. It moved from one house to the next. How sad though that this has died and receded with the tide of change over the years.

The veneration of the Niño Jesus was a village tradition involving the young and old. Caroling behind the Niño Jesus was an event in itself. Most humbling are the kind words of wisdom from our elderly as they convey their blessings. I could still hear them today and it’s what they’ve passed on to us that help our forming our own individual sets of values. Have a good one and *Felis Noche Buena* to all!

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
				
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Mostly Sunny	▲86 ▼79
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲87 ▼78
Yap	Thunderstorms	▲87 ▼77
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲83 ▼77
Pohnpei	Mostly Sunny	▲87 ▼74
Kosrae	Partly Cloudy	▲87 ▼75
Majuro	Showers	▲82 ▼75

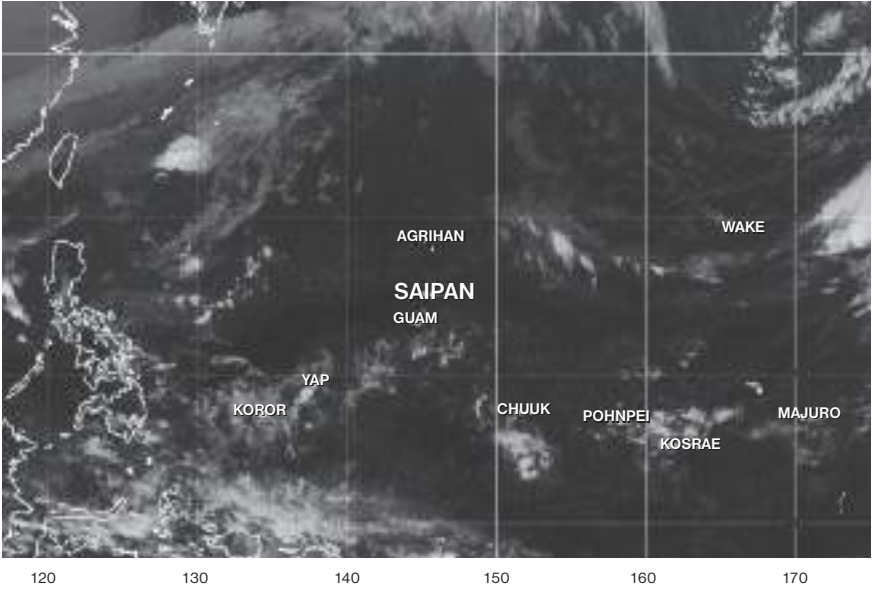
Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲71 ▼65
Beijing	Sunny	▲36 ▼15
Hong Kong	Showers	▲50 ▼37
Honolulu	Sunny	▲80 ▼69
London	Ice	▲41 ▼28
Los Angeles	Cloudy	▲61 ▼49
Manila	Thundershowers	▲87 ▼75
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲70 ▼54
Miami	Mostly Sunny	▲67 ▼51
New York	Windy	▲31 ▼24
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	▲46 ▼39
Paris	Ice	▲40 ▼27
Pusan	Partly Cloudy	▲44 ▼27
Rome	Mostly Sunny	▲43 ▼32
Salem	Showers	▲46 ▼35
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲58 ▼49
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	▲31 ▼17
Tokyo	Showers	▲48 ▼39
Washington, DC	Sunny	▲35 ▼23

Tides

Saipan Harbor				
2:45 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.3 Feet	
8:05 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.8 Feet	
2:36 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet	
9:58 PM	Today	Low Tide:	0.4 Feet	

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2010

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A cold front curves southwestward from near Midway Island at 24N180 to 17N167E then westward as a shear line to southwest of Wake Island at 16N163E and finally northwestward to end at 20N150E. Cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and up to 200 miles northwest of the front east of 170E east of 174E. Convergent winds ahead of the front are generating clouds and scattered showers east of a line from 8N174E to 18N174E. Cloudiness and scattered showers are present along and up to 125 miles north of this boundary west of 170E. A surface trough stretches northward from south of Chuuk at 3N153E to 10N155E. Another trough extends northeastward from south of Pohnpei at 4N159E to 8N162E. Scattered showers are found south of Chuuk between 4N and 7N from 150E to 153E and also near Pohnpei within 90 miles of a line from 6N158E to 7N165E.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Thursday	6:35 AM	5:49 PM
Friday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Saturday	6:36 AM	5:50 PM
Sunday	6:37 AM	5:51 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	1:01 PM	12:56 AM
Thursday	1:39 PM	1:44 AM
Friday	2:19 PM	2:33 AM
Saturday	3:04 PM	3:25 AM
Sunday	3:54 PM	4:20 AM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

- CAMPUS BULLETIN
Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

- For pictures:**
- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
 - Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
 - Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
 - Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
 - For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.
- For announcements:**
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.

- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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 - Fax: (670) 235-3740
 - Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
 - Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
- To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 17, 2010

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM				GUAM-SAIPAN			
C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily	C09316	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
C09313	7:55am	8:45am	3, 6	C09596	6:35am	7:25am	3, 6
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7	C09596	7:00am	7:50am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C09601	12:10pm	1:00pm	1, 4, 5, 7	C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 4, 5, 7
C09603	3:05pm	3:55pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 7	C09602	1:40pm	2:30pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily	C09604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
C09599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily	C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)				NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN			
DL287	6:10am	8:45am	Daily	DL298	10:25am	3:05pm	Daily
DL285	6:40am	9:15am	Daily	DL286	3:50pm	8:25pm	Daily
DL297	4:35pm	7:15pm	Daily	DL288	8:00pm	12:30am+1	Daily
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)				BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 5	OZ607	9:10pm	2:20am+1	4, 7
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)				SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN			
OZ604	2:10am	6:00am	1	OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ604	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7	OZ603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7	OZ603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)				SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN			
FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6	FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
OZ604/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN	OZ704/605	12:10am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ604/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN				via ICN
C09317/891	2:45am	9:45am	3, 6 via GUM	DL172/286	7:55am	8:25pm	Daily via NRT
DL285/173	6:40am	10:15pm	Daily via NRT	C0890/9606	10:55am	8:50pm	3, 6 via GUM
C09313/933	7:55am	9:40pm	6 via GUM	OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
C09313/893	7:55am	11:00pm	3 via GUM+Palau	OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
C09603/933	3:05pm	9:40pm	1, 2, 4, 7 via GUM	C0892/9596	10:25pm	7:25am+1	3 via GUM+Palau
C09603/893	3:05pm	11:00pm	5 via GUM+Palau	C0892/9596	10:25pm	7:50am+1	5 via GUM+Palau
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	1, 2, 4, 6, 7 via GUM	PR110/C0596	10:00pm	7:25am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ606/703	3:20pm	11:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7 ICN	C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:25am+1	3 via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:30pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM	C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 2, 5, 7 via GUM
				C0934/9596	11:59pm	7:25am+1	6 via GUM
				C0934/9596	11:59pm	7:50am+1	4 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG				HONG KONG-SAIPAN			
OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00am	1 via ICN	OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN				via ICN
C09603/909	3:05pm	10:25pm	1, 5 via GUM	OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
OZ606/723	3:20pm	10:35pm	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN	OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
				C0910/9596	11:15pm	7:50am+1	1, 5 via GUM
Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CZ: China Southern; CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The <i>Saipan Tribune</i> is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)							

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 113	11:40	11:50	Daily
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily	FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily	FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
Guam-Rota				FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily	FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
FRE 300	17:50	18:20	Daily				
Saipan-Rota				Tinian-Saipan			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily	FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily	FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily	FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily	FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily	FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily	FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily	FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily	FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily	FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
				FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

Coast Guard cutter aids crew of disabled Rota vessel

Crewmembers from Coast Guard cutter *Assateague* assisted four people aboard a disabled vessel in the vicinity of Rota Sunday.

Watchstanders at Coast Guard Sector Guam received a distress call around 5pm Sunday, from the Rota Department of Public Safety reporting a possible disabled vessel.

The call came after the vessel *JP*, a 25-foot recreational boat with four people aboard, contacted Rota's 911 service via a cellular telephone requesting immediate assistance. The cell phone call quality was poor, but Rota DPS officials were able to obtain the vessel's name, length, general location, and nature of distress

before the call was dropped.

Navy Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 25 was launched immediately to locate the vessel before sunset. The Coast Guard cutter *Assateague*, a 110-foot patrol boat homeported in Apra Harbor, was also launched to locate the vessel.

Coast Guardsmen in the

Sector Guam Command Center worked with Rota DPS and local cell phone provider iConnect to help triangulate the distress call and narrow the search area.

Crewmembers aboard HSC-25 located the *JP* about 6:30pm and directed the *Assateague* to them.

All four mariners were tak-

en aboard the *Assateague*, and the vessel *JP* was towed to Rota. The vessel and its crew were later transferred to Rota DPS. All four people aboard the *JP* were found safe with no reported injuries.

The Coast Guard reminds mariners that cell phones should not be relied on as a primary means of emergency

communication. Cell coverage offshore is not reliable and provides one-on-one communication. The Coast Guard recommends all mariners carry a VHF radio. Emergency broadcasts should be made on VHF channel 16, which can be received by all vessels or emergency responders within transmission range. (USCG)

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Tanapag school cub scouts, boy scouts meeting today

The Tanapag Elementary School Cub Scouts Pack 910 and Boy Scout Troop 910 will be having a meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 15, at 6pm, at the Tanapag Elementary School cafeteria. The agenda will include recruitment of adult leaders, youth protection and safety awareness, money earning project, uniform, and the 2011 CNMI Boy Scouting week activities. There will also be registration for cub scouts (boys ages 7-10) and boy scouts (boys ages 11-17). The registration starts at 5pm at the Tanapag Elementary School. For more information about the meeting and the registration, call Oscar C. Camacho at 234-6246 or Calistro I. Reyes at 285-9709. (PR)

Saipan Southern PTSA meeting today

To all parents and legal guardian of Saipan Southern High School students: There will be a PTSA meeting today, Dec. 15, 2010, from 6pm to 7pm in the Manta café. (PR)

Kagman Elementary PTSA today

The Kagman Elementary School monthly PTSA meeting will be held today, Dec. 15, 2010, at 5:30pm instead of 6:30pm in the school cafeteria. The time has been changed to accommodate the Parent Literacy Night for math, which will begin at 6pm - 7pm. All parents and guardians are highly encouraged to attend this activity. Light refreshments will be provided. If you have any questions or concerns, call 664-3911/12. (PR)

Cha Cha Ocean View report cards, PTSA meeting

Cha Cha Ocean View Jr. High School will be having its 2nd Quarter Mid-Progress Report and PTSA meeting on Thursday, Dec. 16, 2010, from 5pm to 6:30pm. The Mid-Progress Report will be handed out by each teacher in their designated classrooms. The school is encouraging all parents and guardians to join the second Mid-Progress Report/ PTSA meeting. Call the school at 237-3921 or 664-4100 if you have any question or concerns. (PR)

MHS mid-progress reports out Thursday

Marianas High School will be having its Mid-Progress Open House and distribution on Thursday, Dec. 16, from 3:30pm to 6:30pm. Students will be released at 1pm. Parents and guardians are encouraged to visit each teacher to view individual subject progress reports for their child/children. Students age 18 and above may pick up their individual progress reports. (PR)

Kagman High PTSA meeting, report cards

Kagman High School will be dismissing its students early on Dec. 20, 2010, at 12pm as the school will be having its 2nd quarter progress report and PTSA meeting on that day, from 6pm to 7pm in the cafeteria. PSS dietitian's presentation, turnaround status report, and PTSA planned activities highlight the PTSA meeting.

Students' progress report cards will be also issued by respective teachers from 4pm to 6pm, for all subjects. Please ask your child for their 1st - 4th period teachers' name and classroom numbers. This will lessen your time on where to go when you are getting their progress report. For more information, call the school's office at 237-3840/34. (PR)

FOA presents 'A Christmas Carol' this weekend

A story written in the British Victorian era of 1842, Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol* remains an endearing classic more than 150 years after its first publication. Perhaps it is the hope of a second chance at life. Perhaps it is the pleasantness of a reminder for merriment of the holiday season. Perhaps it is a bit of childhood that each person recollects at its retelling. Whatever the case may be, *A Christmas Carol* is a timeless masterpiece, whose theme shines through its many adaptations.

Throughout difficult economic times in the past, Americans have largely turned to entertainment and theater as a way to lighten the mood and return to merriment. In response to this trend, and in honor of the holiday season, the Friends of the Arts is proud to present a comedic adaptation of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*.

FOA invites the CNMI to celebrate Christmas in rollicking good style as the Farndale Avenue Housing Estate Townswomen's Guild Dramatic Society presents its produc-

tion of "A Christmas Carol" at American Memorial Park indoor theater on Dec. 17, 18, and 19 at 7pm each night. These crazy women perform a very fractured version of the holiday classic about Scrooge, the meanest man in Victorian London. Unless you have seen the Farndale women before, you have not seen a version of the Scrooge story like this one. The women put their own special spin on the tale.

All purchased season tickets will be honored at the Friday and Saturday performances, and

regular tickets are also available for purchase from FOA board members or at the performance. Contact Frank Gibson at flgibson@yahoo.com for tickets or more information.

In keeping with the spirit of the season, the final performance on Sunday is a special benefit performance where admission is the donation of non-perishable food or cash for the CNMI Salvation Army. Be sure to get into the holiday spirit this weekend with FOA's hilarious adaptation of *A Christmas Carol*. (PR)

Coast Guard member who rescued 5 people is honored



GUAM—Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class William N. Horne, an electrician's mate at Sector Guam, was selected the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association Person of the Year, Wednesday for his heroism while rescuing five people from a pickup truck engulfed in flames, Feb. 8, 2009.

This honor is just the latest in a series of awards Horne has received.

Horne is an honorary member of the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association and a recipient of the Coast Guard Medal for heroism. Horne was selected as the Enlisted Petty Officer of the Year for 2009 and he recently he received the 2010 Non Commissioned Officers Association Coast Guard Vanguard award.

Horne, a 10-year active duty Coast Guard member, has served at Sector Guam since 2008.

The CGCVA is a Non-Profit Association of Active Duty Members, Retired Members, Reserve Members, and Honorably Discharged Former Members of the Coast Guard. (PR)

U.S. Coast Guard Sector Guam's commanding officer Captain Thomas M. Sparks, left, presents Electrician's Mate First Class William N. Horne with the recognition as the Coast Guard Combat Veterans Association Person of the Year for 2009 on Wednesday, Dec. 8, 2010.

USCG

More than \$20,000 in gifts given to Guam kids

» First lady, Chinese Chamber help Salvation Army

It is better to give than to receive.

This year more than 1,000 gifts and toys valued at more than \$20,000 were donated to the Salvation Army to help warm the hearts of hundreds of children this holiday season.

Guam first lady Joann G. Camacho joined George Lai, president of the Chinese Cham-

ber of Commerce of Guam; Alfred Lam, former president of CCCG; Jack Chen, chair of the Toy Drive; Peter Lai, vice-chair; and other members of the CCCG to present the gifts to the Salvation Army.

The donation took place yesterday, Dec. 14, 2010, at the Community Hall of the Salva-

tion Army in Tiyan.

"George Lai and I have worked together on many civic and charitable events for our island. This is our way of spreading the holiday spirit," said Camacho. "Once again, we are humbled and blessed to be able to assist the Salvation Army."

On behalf of CCCG mem-

bers who each donated toys to the charitable cause, George Lai said his members were more than happy to give back to the community.

"We have all come together to help the Salvation Army and ensure no child is without a gift this Christmas," said George Lai. (PR)



BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

This very happy birthday shoutout goes out to Bernadette Asia Laviste, who is celebrating her birthday today, Dec. 15! May you have an awesomely great and wonderful day, and may you have many, many more birthdays to come! Hoping all your birthday wishes come true! Much love from all your family and friends!

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Business

Lucky Qiang Mart holds grand opening today



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lucky Qiang Mart, located in the former Kim's Family Market Building, will hold its grand opening today.

TINIAN— Gifts of hats and calendars will be given to all first day customers along with a 15-percent discount on all purchases as Tinian's newest store will hold its grand opening today.

Lucky Qiang Mart is owned and run by longtime Tinian resident Lin Castro and his wife Lisa. It is located in the former Kim's Family Market Building.

Featuring fully air-condi-

tioned shopping comfort, plus easy-to-navigate wide aisles, new coolers, freezers and shelving, the expanded new store will also offer fresh local produce from the family farm, school, and office supplies and a wide range of grocery items, at competitive prices.

Future additions may be fabrics and sewing supplies, if there should be sufficient cus-

tomers demand. Visa, MasterCard, and Pacific Express cards will be accepted as soon as applications have been processed, which may take another week to be finalized.

Castro is an NMC graduate with an AA degree in Business Management, who has had the benefit of experience assisting his sister with her own Lucky D Market in the Dandan area of Saipan.

Prior to his taking over the 30-year landmark long known to locals as "Mrs. Kim's Market" the new owner worked at Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino for three years, in the human resources department, so has ample experience in dealing with both the public and staff.

The Lucky Qiang Mart will be open seven days a week, from 6:30am to midnight. (PR)

Obama-GOP tax bill clears Senate hurdle with ease

WASHINGTON (AP)—Far-reaching legislation to avert a Jan. 1 income-tax increase for millions won overwhelming support in a Senate test vote on Monday, propelled by an uneasy and unusual alliance between the White House and lawmakers in both parties.

Eager to trumpet the 83-15 vote, President Barack Obama said even before it was announced it proved "that both parties can in fact work together to grow our economy and look out for the American people."

Senate passage of the bill is expected as early as Tuesday, and in a brief appearance at the White House, Obama called on the House to follow suit quickly. He spoke amid indications that a revolt among House Democratic liberals was ebbing, further improving prospects for quick enactment.

The legislation would provide a two-year reprieve in the tax increases scheduled to take effect on Jan. 1 at all income levels, reduce Social Security taxes for every wage earner in

2011 and extend an expiring program of jobless benefits for the long-term unemployed.

It also includes a scaled back estate tax that Republicans support and has become a source of Democrats' discontent. The bill's overall cost, estimated at \$858 billion over two years, would be added to already huge federal deficits.

The legislation presents a postelection reach across party lines after two years of gridlock. Republicans wanted a permanent extension of all the tax cuts enacted when George W. Bush was president, while Democrats insisted rates be permitted to rise on incomes over \$200,000 for individuals and \$250,000 for couples.

In his remarks, Obama gave no indication he was willing to accept further changes to the plan he negotiated with senior Republicans.

"I understand those concerns," he said of objections

from some of his usual allies in Congress. "I share some of them. But that's the nature of compromise, sacrificing something that each of us cares about to move forward on what matters to all of us."

The remarks were directed largely at Democratic critics who last week vowed to prevent the bill from coming to the floor unless it was changed to scale back the billions in relief ticketed to the wealthy.

But with lawmakers eager to adjourn for the year, officials said that demand appeared to be fading. Under discussion is an alternative approach that would bring the bill up for debate as drafted, with opponents of the estate tax provision given a chance to change it if they can gain the necessary votes.

Despite strong criticism from fellow Democrats, Obama has made passage of the bill a key year-end priority, calling it essential for the economy as it

struggles to recover from the worst recession in decades.

The Senate vote was never in doubt, and the total was well above the 60 needed for the legislation to advance. Nine Democrats and five Republicans voted to block the bill, as did Sen. Bernie Sanders, a Vermont independent who spoke against it last Friday in an eight-hour speech on the Senate floor.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., and his GOP counterpart, Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, were joint sponsors of the bill, a symbolic gesture of bipartisanship on an issue that produced nothing but gridlock until midterm elections gave Republicans additional leverage in negotiations.

"We're telling the American people to keep money that's rightfully theirs, so they can spend it and invest it as they please," said McConnell.

In a jab at Democrats, he added, "This is an important shift, and the White House should be applauded for agreeing to it."

Madoff won't attend his son's funeral

NEW YORK (AP)—Imprisoned financier Bernard Madoff won't seek to attend his son's funeral out of consideration for the privacy of his son's wife and four children, his lawyer said Monday.

Attorney Ira Sorkin said Madoff instead will mourn privately at the North Carolina prison where he's serving a 150-year sentence for his fraud conviction in what authorities have called history's largest Ponzi scheme.

Madoff's older son, Mark Madoff, 46, hanged himself early Saturday in his Manhattan apartment two years after his father was arrested on charges that he cheated thousands of people out of tens of billions of dollars.

Sorkin declined to say whether Madoff considered asking to attend his son's funeral. The lawyer would say only: "Mr. Madoff will not be attending the funeral out of consideration for his

daughter-in-law's and grandchildren's privacy. He will be conducting a private service on his own where he is presently incarcerated."

Sorkin commented a day after the city medical examiner's office formally ruled Mark Madoff's death a suicide. Madoff was found hanging from a dog leash in his apartment. His 2-year-old son was found asleep in an adjacent room.

Madoff's body hadn't been picked up from the medical examiner's office for burial as of Monday, office spokeswoman Ellen Borakove said.

The death came while the Madoff family faced increased scrutiny in the days before the two-year anniversary of Bernard Madoff's arrest as a court-appointed trustee trying to recover money for investors filed dozens of lawsuits to meet a filing deadline.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Fed to review \$600B bond-buying program at meeting

WASHINGTON (AP)—After launching a much-criticized \$600 billion bond-buying program last month to bolster the economy, the Federal Reserve is now taking stock of how it's working. Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke and his colleagues will gather Tuesday for their last scheduled meeting of 2010, and no policy changes are expected. Instead, Fed policymakers will examine the effectiveness of the unfolding program and discuss the implications of a tax-cut plan emerging from Congress.

Yahoo preparing to lay off 600 to 700 workers

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Yahoo Inc.'s holiday trimmings will include 600 to 700 layoffs in the Internet company's latest shake-up triggered by lackluster growth. Employees could be notified of the job cuts as early as Tuesday, according to a person familiar with Yahoo's plans. The person asked for anonymity because Yahoo hadn't made a formal announcement.

The planned cutbacks represent about 5 percent of Yahoo's work force of 14,100 employees. It will mark Yahoo's fourth mass layoff in the past three years.

Oil falls to near \$88 ahead of US supply figures

SINGAPORE (AP)—Oil prices fell to near \$88 a barrel Tuesday in Asia as traders look to weekly U.S. crude inventory figures for signs demand could be improving. Benchmark oil for January delivery was down 41 cents to \$88.20 a barrel at midday Singapore time in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract rose 82 cents to settle at \$88.61. Crude inventories likely fell 3 million barrels last week, according to analysts surveyed by Platts, the energy information arm of McGraw-Hill Cos. The American Petroleum Institute is scheduled to announce its inventory numbers later Tuesday while the Energy Department's Energy Information Administration reports its weekly supply data Wednesday.

STOCK PORTFOLIO



LEADING INDICATORS

DOW

11,428.56
18.24
0.16%

S&P

1,240.46
0.06
0.00%

NASDAQ

2,624.91
-12.63
-0.48%

EXCHANGE RATES

In U.S. dollar terms

Australian Dollar	1.0059
British Pound	0.6309
Canadian Dollar	1.0041
Chinese Yuan	6.6628
Euro	0.7482

Hong Kong Dollar	7.7775
Indian Rupee	45.1375
Indonesian Rupiah	9,022.5
Japanese Yen	83.755
Malaysian Ringgit	3.1401
New Zealand Dollar	1.3238

Philippine Peso	43.8800
Singapore Dollar	1.3056
South Korean Won	1,145.825
Swiss Franc	0.9683
Taiwan Dollar	30.0425
Thailand Baht	30.0550

Nation

US diplomat Richard Holbrooke dies

WASHINGTON (AP)—Richard Holbrooke, a brilliant and feisty U.S. diplomat who wrote part of the Pentagon Papers, was the architect of the 1995 Bosnia peace plan and served as President Barack Obama's special envoy to Pakistan and Afghanistan, died Monday, the State Department said. He was 69.

Calling Holbrooke "a true giant of American foreign policy," Obama paid homage to the veteran diplomat as "a truly unique figure who will be remembered for his tireless diplomacy, love of country, and pursuit of peace." Holbrooke deserves credit for much of the progress in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the president said.

Holbrooke, whose forceful style earned him nicknames such as "The Bulldozer" and "Raging Bull," was admitted to the hospital on Friday after becoming ill at the State Department. The former U.S. ambassador to the U.N. had surgery Saturday to repair a tear in his aorta, the body's principal artery.

Secretary of State Hillary



In this Oct. 15, 2010, file photo U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Richard Holbrooke talks to media at the European Council building in Brussels.

Clinton called Holbrooke one of America's "fiercest champions and most dedicated public servants."

"Richard Holbrooke served the country he loved for nearly half a century, representing the United States in far-flung war

zones and high-level peace talks, always with distinctive brilliance and unmatched determination," Clinton said.

Holbrooke served under every Democratic president from John F. Kennedy to Obama in a lengthy career that began with a

foreign service posting in Vietnam in 1962 after graduating from Brown University, and included time as a member of the U.S. delegation to the Paris Peace Talks on Vietnam.

On Capitol Hill, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman John Kerry, D-Mass., called the loss of Holbrooke "almost incomprehensible," adding that his "tough-as-nails, never-quit diplomacy" saved tens of thousands of lives. Republican Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen of Florida, who will chair the House Foreign Affairs Committee next year, called Holbrooke "a dynamic force in American diplomacy" whose "stellar service is deeply appreciated and held in the highest esteem."

Holbrooke's sizable ego, tenacity and willingness to push hard for diplomatic results won him both admiration and animosity.

"If Richard calls you and asks you for something, just say yes," former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger once said. "If you say no, you'll eventually get to yes, but the journey will

be very painful."

He learned to become extremely informed about whatever country he was in, push for an exit strategy and look for ways to get those who live in a country to take increasing responsibility for their own security.

"He's a bulldog for the globe," Tim Wirth, president of the United Nations Foundation, once said.

The bearish Holbrooke said he has no qualms about "negotiating with people who do immoral things."

"If you can prevent the deaths of people still alive, you're not doing a disservice to those already killed by trying to do so," he said in 1999.

Born in New York City on April 24, 1941, Richard Charles Albert Holbrooke had an interest in public service from his early years. He was good friends in high school with a son of Dean Rusk and he grew close to the family of the man who would become a secretary of state for presidents Kennedy and Johnson.

Holbrooke was a young provincial representative for the U.S. Agency for International Development in South Vietnam and then an aide to two U.S. ambassadors in Saigon. At the Johnson White House, he wrote one volume of the Pentagon Papers, an internal government study of U.S. involvement in Vietnam that was completed in 1967.

The study, leaked in 1971 by a former Defense Department aide, had many damaging revelations, including a memo that stated the reason for fighting in Vietnam was based far more on preserving U.S. prestige than preventing communism or helping the Vietnamese.

After stints in and out of government—including as Peace Corps director in Morocco, editing positions at Foreign Policy and Newsweek magazines and adviser to Jimmy Carter's presidential campaign—Holbrooke became assistant secretary of state for Asian affairs from 1977-81. He then shifted back to private life—and the financial world, at Lehman Brothers.

Winter storm traps drivers in Indiana, moves east

LAPORTE, Ind. (AP)—Kate Ergang wasn't worried when two jackknifed semi-tractors trapped her and a friend on an Indiana highway in a blizzard. They had eaten dinner already and had blankets and pillows in the car. They talked, listened to their iPods and dozed off.

But the May college graduate had a few minutes of panic Monday morning when she woke and realized that nearly 12 hours later, they were still in the same spot.

More than 100 vehicles were stuck Monday on Indiana's snow-covered highways. Strong winds and blowing snow hampered snow plow drivers' efforts to free them, but most motorists had been rescued safely by early Monday afternoon, said Beth West, the assistant director of LaPorte County 911. A few were still stuck in drifts Monday evening, with plows trying to reach them.

The wind and heavy lake effect snow were part of a slow-moving storm that has been crawling across the Midwest since Friday night. At least 15 deaths have been attributed to the storm, which dumped nearly 2 feet of snow in parts of Minnesota and Wisconsin before moving into Michigan and Indiana. Monday, it stretched further east, with snow in parts of Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York.

Up to 16 inches of snow fell in northwest Indiana, where 70 drivers got stuck in drifts on a section of Indiana 2 in the Valparaiso area. Ergang and her friend, Allison Frank, were among an unknown number trapped on U.S. 30.

They were driving home to Crown Point on Sunday after visiting friends in central Indiana. All was fine until they reached Wanatah, about 35 miles southwest of South Bend.

"It was a whiteout. It was like a tornado of snow," Ergang said.

Big legal setback for Obama's health care overhaul

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama's historic health care overhaul hit its first major legal roadblock Monday, thrown into doubt by a federal judge's declaration that the heart of the sweeping legislation is unconstitutional. The decision handed Republican foes ammunition for their repeal effort next year as the law heads for almost certain eventual judgment by the U.S. Supreme Court.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Henry E. Hudson, a Republican appointee in Richmond, Va., marked the first successful court challenge to any portion of the new law, following two earlier rulings in its favor by Democratic-appointed judges.

The law's central requirement for nearly all Americans to carry insurance is unconstitutional, well beyond Congress' power to mandate, Hudson ruled, agreeing with the argument of Virginia's Republican attorney general—and many of the GOP lawmakers who will take con-



President Barack Obama pauses during a statement on the tax cut bill at the White House on Monday, Dec. 13, 2010 in Washington.

trol of the U.S. House in January. Hudson denied Virginia's request to strike down the law in its entirety or block it from being implemented while his ruling is appealed by the Obama administration.

"An individual's personal decision to purchase—or decline to purchase—health insurance from a private provider is be-

yond the historical reach of the Commerce Clause," said Hudson, a 2002 appointee of President George W. Bush.

Nevertheless, the White House predicted it would prevail in the Supreme Court, although it may be a year or two before the health care law gets there. The next step for the Virginia lawsuit is the 4th U.S. Circuit

Court of Appeals in Richmond, where Democratic-appointed judges hold a majority.

In an interview with television station WFLA in Tampa, Fla., on Monday, Obama emphasized that other judges had either found the law constitutional or dismissed lawsuits against it.

"Keep in mind this is one ruling by one federal district court. We've already had two federal district courts that have ruled that this is definitely constitutional," Obama said. "You've got one judge who disagreed. That's the nature of these things."

But in the short term, the latest court ruling hands potent ammunition to GOP opponents as they prepare to assert control in the new Congress with promises to repeal the law. Obama in turn has promised to veto any repeal legislation and appears likely to be able to prevail since Democrats retain control of the Senate. Republicans also have discussed trying to starve the law of funding.

ACROSS THE NATION

Chief: Man shot by officers pointed a water nozzle

LONG BEACH, Calif. (AP)—A man shot to death by two police officers was found to have pointed a pistol-grip water nozzle at them rather than a weapon, the police chief said Monday at a news conference marked by sobs from the victim's relatives. The Long

Beach officers were summoned by a 911 report of a man with a gun and fired at him when he pointed the black metal-tipped object at them in a two-handed posture that looked like what a person would do when they are about to shoot a weapon, Chief Jim McDonnell said. Douglas Zerby, 35, was pronounced dead Sunday afternoon at the scene.

US sues school over denial of Muslim pilgrimage

WASHINGTON (AP)—The federal government sued a suburban Chicago school district Monday for denying a Muslim middle school teacher unpaid leave to make a pilgrimage to Mecca that is a central part of her religion. In a civil rights case, the department said the

school district in Berkeley, Ill., denied the request of Safoorah Khan on grounds that her requested leave was unrelated to her professional duties and was not set forth in the contract between the school district and the teachers union. In doing so the school district violated the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by failing to reasonably accommodate her religious practices,

the government said.

Katrina shooting victim's skull still missing

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Rebecca Glover said her family could not have been more horrified by what happened to her nephew: He was shot by police days after Hurricane Katrina hit, then left to die in a car that a police officer drove to a deserted

levee and set ablaze. Now she wants to know what happened to her nephew's skull. Glover said the family was relieved after a jury last week convicted three current or former officers in Henry Glover's death, the burning of his body and the doctoring of a report on the shooting. "But I still want to know what they did with his head," she said. "We want his skull back."

Asia

No decisive victory one year into Afghan surge

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—One year after President Barack Obama ordered a troop buildup to halt the Taliban's momentum, the war in Afghanistan has not broken decisively in favor of U.S.-led forces—at least not yet.

While NATO forces have routed insurgents from their strongholds in southern Afghanistan, the Taliban's strongest region, the militants have opened new fronts in the north and west and have stepped up attacks in the east.

At the same time, the surge has exacted a high price: More than 680 international troops, including at least 472 Americans, have been killed in 2010, making it the deadliest year of the war. Hundreds of Afghan civilians have also died, most as a result of Taliban attacks.

There has been little progress in dislodging the militants from



In this photo taken Dec. 12, 2010, an Afghan police officer checks beneath a car at a check point in Kandahar south of Kabul, Afghanistan.

their sanctuaries across the border in Pakistan. A corrupt and ineffectual Afghan government remains a fragile pillar of the U.S. war strategy. And many Afghans expect the Taliban to return to their southern strongholds when the winter snows melt.

"Will they come back? This will be answered in the spring," said Sadeek Dhattani, a 41-year-old farmer in Marjah. "What I think is yes they probably will because when spring appears, the Taliban always show up with greater force and enthusiasm."

PH Supreme Court acquits ex-senator's son, 6 others in celebrated massacre case

By TETCH TORRES
INQUIRER.NET

MANILA, Philippines—The Philippine Supreme Court yesterday acquitted former senator's son Hubert Webb and several others in connection with the celebrated Vizconde massacre case.

"The prosecution failed to prove beyond reasonable doubt the guilt of the accused," court administrator and spokesman Jose Midas Marquez said.

Marquez said seven justices who voted for the acquittal are questioning the quality of the prosecution's main witness.

"Jessica Alfaro is an NBI

(National Bureau of Investigation) agent, not really an eye witness," Marquez said.

"There were also suspicious details showing inherent inconsistencies, all corroboration cannot be relied on... In all, there is reasonable and lingering doubt on the guilt of the accused," Marquez said.

Aside from Webb, the high court also acquitted Antonio Lejano II, Michael Gatchalian, Miguel Rodriguez, Peter Estrada, and Hospicio "Pyke" Fernandez.

Marquez said Joey Filart and Artemio Ventura who were never arrested and have been at large are

not part of the acquittal.

"No proceedings were held against them," Marquez said.

The high court ordered the Bureau of Corrections to release all the accused as soon as possible.

He added that Biong, who was convicted as an accessory to the crime, is also acquitted because he was specifically pointed by the government witness as the one who allegedly covered the tracks of Webb's group.

No motion for reconsideration can be filed.

"No MR can be filed otherwise it is tantamount to double jeopardy."

battles in the Pacific and helped turn the tide against the Japanese.

PH court orders return of Marcos mansion

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Former Philippine first lady Imelda Marcos has welcomed as a Christmas gift a court decision to return one of the sprawling mansions the government seized from her after her husband was deposed. The Supreme Court said the government agency created to recover billions of dollars allegedly looted by former dictator Ferdinand Marcos and his wife failed to prove that the beachfront, 104-acre (42-hectare) estate was acquired improperly. Monday's ruling came 24 years after a "people power" uprising ousted Marcos and the new government sequestered most of their property.

Search ends for fishermen missing off Antarctica

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—Seventeen fishermen missing for more than 30 hours after their South Korean boat sank near Antarctica were given up for dead Tuesday, with officials saying no one could have survived the icy waters. New Zealand's rescue coordination center, which was running a search by private vessels in the remote region, said it had suspended the operation indefinitely. The No. 1 Insung went down Monday some 1,400 miles (2,200 kilometers) south of New Zealand, about halfway to Antarctica. It sank quickly—prompting speculation it struck an iceberg—and the crew of 42 had to abandon ship without donning survival gear.

World

Stockholm bomber seen as radical by UK Muslims

LONDON (AP)—At his local mosque in England, Taimour Abdulwahab alarmed elders with his extreme views on Islam. On the Internet, he posted videos of Chechen fighters and abused Iraqi prisoners.

On Saturday, officials say, he died in a botched suicide bombing in Stockholm.

Authorities are now trying to learn when he was radicalized, whether he had accomplices—and how a man whose radical views were displayed both online and in person escaped official notice.

Swedish prosecutor Tomas Lindstrand said Monday that authorities are certain the suicide bomber who terrified pre-Christmas shoppers was Abdulwahab, an Iraqi-born Swede who spent much of the past decade in Britain. He said Abdulwahab was completely

unknown to Swedish security police before the blasts, which killed the bomber and injured two others.

Lindstrand said officials would look into why he was not on their radar, but pointed out "that he didn't live in Sweden, he lived in the U.K., he left Sweden maybe 10 years ago."

He also said Swedish security was not "a Stasi organization" engaged in analyzing people's Facebook pages.

U.S. and Swedish officials said that a team of FBI bomb experts had been dispatched to the Nordic nation to help analyze the explosives.

A British official who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity be-

cause of the sensitivity of his work would not comment on whether Abdulwahab had been on the radar as a suspected terrorist. But he said all threats stemming from controversial cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad—cited by the suspect as a motive for the attack—were being closely investigated.

Lars Vilks, whose 2007 depiction of the Prophet Muhammad has drawn regular threats from

extremists, told AP he was shocked that suicide bombings have come to Sweden.

"It's a little unreal that we have such a case here," he said, adding that police had increased their presence outside his home following the botched attack.



Abdulwahab

WikiLeaks drug corruption report hits Peru general

LIMA, Peru (AP)—A leaked U.S. diplomatic message reporting speculation that the new head of Peru's military was involved in drug corruption has shaken the nation's armed forces, with the general angrily denying any drug ties on Monday and saying he may take legal action against the former U.S. ambassador.

The March 2009 document from then-Ambassador Michael McKinley noted that a source—whose name was omitted in the released document—"saw signs that officers may have continued to

cooperate with drug traffickers." It was released Sunday by WikiLeaks.

The document cited a 2007 meeting between Gen. Paul da Silva and a regional fishing industry leader, Rolando Eugenio Velasco Heysen, and said the source suggested they were coordinating drug shipments. Velasco was arrested in October 2007 on charges of trying to export 840 kilograms of cocaine hidden in frozen fish and remains imprisoned facing trial.

Da Silva, then chief of the Piura military region, was

named head of Peru's army this month.

Da Silva held a news conference at army headquarters Monday to deny the suggestion, saying that while he did meet with Velasco, they talked about the fishing industry executive's offer to supply the military with seafood.

Guido Chirinos, a press office official at the U.S. Embassy in Lima, said U.S. officials would not comment on any document released by WikiLeaks.

Defense Minister Jaime Thorne told reporters that he backs the general.

WORLD BRIEFS

After setback, US resumes Mideast peace push

JERUSALEM (AP)—The U.S. Mideast envoy returned to the region on Monday, seeking to revive troubled peace efforts after a major setback in which Washington abandoned efforts to coax Israel to freeze Jewish settlement in areas Palestinians want for a future state. The envoy, George Mitchell, was expected to push the Israelis and Palestinians for progress on key issues at the heart of their conflict. But in a reflection of the difficulties ahead, Mitchell was being forced to meet separately with the sides during the two-day visit, and expectations for a breakthrough were low. The failure to halt Israeli settlement construction has left President Barack Obama's signature peace effort in embarrassing limbo.

Some Mexican march for 3rd day for slain drug lord

MORELIA, Mexico (AP)—Some Mexicans demonstrated in the streets Monday for a third straight day to show support for a slain drug lord who reputedly gave money and preached religion to the poor. More than 100 people marched through the Michoacan state capital, Morelia, holding signs lauding Nazario Moreno, the chief of La Familia cartel who the government says was killed during two days of battles with federal police last week. One sign urged Moreno's reputed successor—Jose de Jesus Mendez—"to go hard after the government but don't involve civilians." A caravan of cars spray-painted with pro-La Familia messages also drove from Morelia to the lake town of Patzcuaro. One sign read "Long live the Familia

Michoacana, Out with the PF (Federal Police)."

Ruling party victory in St. Vincent and Grenadines

KINGSTOWN, St. Vincent (AP)—Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves, who has led the Caribbean nation of St. Vincent and the Grenadines into an alliance with Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, won a narrow victory in parliamentary elections Monday to keep his party in power for another five years. His United Labour Party won just eight seats, down from 12 in the previous Parliament. The New Democratic Party increased its share to seven seats from three. Opposition parties had hoped the islands' economic hardships would bring a change in government, although recent opinion polls gave the edge to Gonsalves and his party.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Japanese leader visits WWII battlesite Iwo Jima

IOTO, Japan (AP)—Making a rare trip to Iwo Jima, Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan paid his respects Tuesday to the more than 21,000 soldiers who died in one of World War II's bloodiest battlegrounds—and one that after 65 years is still giving up its dead. Kan's visit follows the recent discovery of two mass graves on the tiny, volcanic isle where the bodies of roughly 12,000 Japanese soldiers have yet to be recovered. Officials traveling with Kan said the visit underscores his resolve to finally account for all of Iwo Jima's dead. Now known in Japan as Ioto—that was what the island was called by residents before the war—Iwo Jima was the site of one of the most fateful and iconic

Focus

Plenty of folks are aware of the best states for retirees. But what are the 10 worst states in which to spend your golden years?

People of Illinois, California, New York, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Ohio, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Nevada—you probably already know the answer.

The list, with Illinois leading the pack, comes from website TopRetirements.com. According to John Brady, president of TopRetirements.com, the 10 states earn this dubious distinction largely because of three factors: fiscal health, taxation and climate.

As for fiscal health, six of the 10 worst states for retirees on TopRetirements.com's list were among those just identified by a Pew Center for States report as being in "fiscal peril."

The report, "Beyond California: States in Fiscal Peril," showed that "some of the same pressures that have pushed California toward economic disaster are wreaking havoc in a number of other states, with potentially damaging consequences for the entire country."

Arizona, Florida, Illinois, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island and Wisconsin joined California as the 10 most troubled states, according to Pew's analysis.

Of note, TopRetirements.com's Brady suggested that retirees and would-be retirees might want to avoid states in fiscal peril because these locales might be expected to face decreasing services and increasing taxation.

Topping his website's list, Illinois's fiscal health could be the worst of any state, observed Brady. "It even borrowed money to fund its pension obligations," he said. As for California, he said the Golden State—though it does have a warm climate—is expensive and its finances are in disarray. What's more, he added, it has paid some bills with vouchers.

New York wasn't mentioned as being in fiscal trouble by the Pew Center, but it does have "very high taxes, including property taxes." In fact, Brady said New York has the second-highest



CARMINE GALASSO/THE RECORD/MCT

Retiree Bob Greenberg, 68, relies on the drug Revlimid to treat his bone cancer. Each pill costs the Paramus, New Jersey, resident nearly \$400 and he is losing his health benefits soon.

The 10 worst states for retirees

By **ROBERT POWELL**
MARKETWATCH

ON THE NET:

- Worst-state rankings at TopRetirements.com: <http://www.topretirements.com/blog/great-towns/our-worst-states-to-retire-list.html>
- Pew Center on the States report on states' fiscal peril: [http://www.pew-centeronthestates.org/news\(UNDERScore\)room\(UNDERScore\)detail.aspx?id=55920](http://www.pew-centeronthestates.org/news(UNDERScore)room(UNDERScore)detail.aspx?id=55920)
- Tax Foundation report on tax burdens by state: <http://www.taxfoundation.org/taxdata/show/336.html>
- Best places for military retirement, from USAA: <http://bit.ly/h7kjK2>
- Missouri's state-by-state analysis of cost of living: [http://www.missourieconomy.org/indicators/cost\(UNDERScore\)of\(UNDERScore\)living/index.stm](http://www.missourieconomy.org/indicators/cost(UNDERScore)of(UNDERScore)living/index.stm)
- Best and worst states for retirement, according to MoneyRates.com: <http://www.money-rates.com/blog/2010/09/best-and-worst-states-for-retirement-the-complete-list.htm>

lakeside Wisconsin city's daily winter mean temperature is 24.1 degrees Fahrenheit. But fellow Great Lakes metropolis Cleveland is the fourth-coldest U.S. city, with a daily winter mean temperature that's not much higher at 28.4 degrees Fahrenheit.

Wisconsin, as noted, is doubly cursed in these rankings as a high-tax state with cold weather. Plus, it has high property taxes. The only good news, at least for those to whom it applies, is that the Badger State doesn't tax military pensions.

In a related survey, USAA and Military.com announced last week that Waco, Texas, tops the first-ever "Best Places for Military Retirement" list. In its report, USAA and Military.com focused on U.S. communities that offer

"a high quality of life and help maximize military retiree benefits as service members manage their 'first retirement' from the armed forces and begin planning their 'second retirement' from civilian life." Other places on that list included, in order, Oklahoma City; Austin, Texas; College Station, Texas; Harrisburg, Pa.; San Angelo, Texas; Madison, Wis.; Pittsburgh; New Orleans; and Syracuse, N.Y.

New England had two other states on Brady's list of worst places for retirees: Massachusetts, which has high taxes including high property taxes and a very high cost of living, and Connecticut, which has the third-highest tax burden of any state as well as high property taxes.

"It has some terrific places to live,

but the cost of living is very high," he said of Connecticut. What's worse, the Nutmeg State taxes Social Security.

States with the highest cost of living in the third quarter of 2010 were, in order, Hawaii, Alaska, California, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maryland, Vermont and New Hampshire, according to a Missouri Economic Research and Information Center analysis. The District of Columbia also makes the list.

Ironically, the 10th-worst place to retire is the one state where it's easy to find a cheap place to live: Nevada. As many know, Nevada is presently the home-foreclosure capital of the world. In fact, the Silver State continues to lead the nation in terms of foreclosure filings per household, with one filing for every 79 homes, according to RealtyTrac. Yes, the state is having financial problems, but the good news for retirees living there or contemplating a move there is that it doesn't have an income tax—at least not yet.

Of course, not everyone is smitten with Nevada as a place to retire. MoneyRates.com published in September its list of the 10 worst states for retirees. That site, which examined such factors as crime rates, climate, longevity and economic conditions, including taxes, job opportunities and cost of living, found the worst states for retirees were, in order, Nevada, Michigan, Alaska, South Carolina, Maryland, Tennessee, Ohio, North Carolina, Missouri and Arkansas.

Does any of this mean you shouldn't retire to these poorly ranked states? According to Brady, the answer is no. "Every individual has to consider his or her own criteria for selecting a list of the worst or best states to retire," he said. "The best way to start your individual list of best or worst states is to rank, or at least think about, your most important criteria."

In his study, Brady focused mostly on fiscal health, taxation and climate. But according to Brady, the full list of factors to consider when searching for a state in which to retire includes: taxes; climate and topography; crime; fiscal health of the state; recreation; transportation; health care; cost of living, including housing; education, including college; cultural resources; susceptibility to natural disasters; proximity to friends and family; and fitting in socially, politically and religiously.

And of those, taxes might be the most important. Retirees are affected in different ways by taxes, he said. For instance, the taxation of pensions and Social Security might be better or worse in different states. Ditto, sales taxes.

Property taxes can vary widely, as well. For instance, Brady said, property tax can be one of the biggest bills for retirees and it's a category of taxation that's not progressive. You might not have any income, but you will still get taxed on the full value of your house, he said. Of note, some states do have programs to help seniors control their property taxes. Inheritance and estate taxes are also to be considered, though he said such taxes might be viewed as the tax tail wagging the state-of-residence dog.

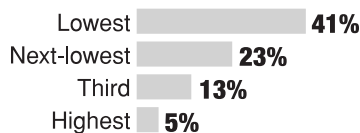
Choosing the best state in which to retire depends on many individual factors, and in truth, said Brady, "For any two people, the 10-worst-states-for-retirees list might be a good list for one person, but not for (the other)."

Coming up short

Percentage of U.S. retirees likely to run short of money, according to new analysis, assuming they retire at age 65:

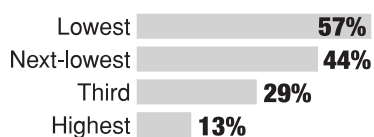
After 10 years of retirement

By preretirement income quartile



After 20 years of retirement

By preretirement income quartile



NOTE: One is considered to have "run short of money" if aggregate resources cannot meet minimum expenses

© 2010 MCT
Source: Employee Benefit Research Institute
Graphic: Pat Carr

MCT 2010

Chart showing percentage of U.S. retirees likely to run short of money after 10 or 20 years of retirement, according to new analysis by EBRI.

tax burden and fifth-highest per capita property taxes. Plus, he said, the Empire State has a "dysfunctional state legislature." As if that wasn't bad enough, it's terrifically expensive to live in New York. The only benefit to living in New York, he said, is that pensions are exempt from income tax.

As for Rhode Island, Brady said it's probably the worst-off state in the Northeast from a financial viewpoint. It also has high taxes, though he noted that the state does boast some great places to live.

New Jersey, according to Brady's analysis, has the highest property taxes in the U.S., as well as the highest total tax burden of any state, as reported in a 2008 Tax Foundation report. Plus, New Jersey has serious pension-funding issues, Brady noted. States with the greatest tax burdens after New Jersey were New York, Connecticut, Maryland, Hawaii, California, Ohio, Vermont, Wisconsin and Rhode Island, joined by the District of Columbia.

According to Brady, Ohio has high taxes and high unemployment (9.9 percent in October). Plus, it has cold winters.

Of the 40 largest cities in the United States, Milwaukee has the coldest winter weather, based on normal daily temperatures, according to Current Results, a website that tracks weather trends. The

Campus Life

Foreign language courses growing on campuses

By ERIC GORSKI
AP EDUCATION WRITER

A growing number of U.S. college students are studying foreign languages, a trend propelled by greater interest in Arabic, a broader palette of languages being taught and more crowded language classes at community colleges, a new study finds.

But despite the strong interest, experts warn that foreign language study on campuses is in peril because of budget cuts and a dwindling number of graduate students who form the foundation of future college language faculties.

The latest figures from the Modern Language Association, released Wednesday, show that enrollment in foreign language courses grew 6.6 percent between 2006 and 2009, achieving a high mark since the study began in 1960.

While advocates of language study

say any growth is good, things have slowed down since the group's previous report, which showed 12.9 percent growth between 2002 and 2006.

"This is a vulnerable time for language study," said Rosemary Feal, the association's executive director and a Spanish professor at the University of Buffalo. "While interest in language study remains strong and students are increasingly interested in studying a wide range of languages, opportunities to study languages may be threatened by program cuts at many colleges and universities."

Spanish remained the most popular language, with 864,986 students enrolled in classes, a 5 percent increase from 2006. Other European standbys such as French, German and Italian gained, too, but not as fast as other languages.

The biggest gainer was Arabic, which jumped to No. 8 from No. 10 on the list of most-studied languages.

Interest in languages often rise with world events, but many experts say Arabic is not a passing fad considering the long-term importance of U.S. relations with the Muslim world.

Enrollments in Arabic courses grew 46 percent, to 35,083. Other languages that saw double-digit enrollment gains include Korean (up 19 percent), Chinese (18.2 percent), American Sign Language (16.4 percent), Portuguese (10.8 percent) and Japanese (10.3 percent).

More than 244 less-commonly taught languages saw enrollment growth of more than 20 percent in total. More than 35 languages were being taught that were not in classrooms in 2006, including several Native American languages.

Russell Berman, professor of German studies and comparative literature at Stanford University, cites a variety of reasons for the growth of foreign language study: career opportunities,

students motivated by their heritage, the rise of globalization and the importance of foreign languages as a cornerstone of a liberal arts education.

The report also shines a light on significant growth of language studies at two-year colleges—14 percent between 2006 and 2009. Community colleges see more students in general during down economic times. But Feal also said more students see the job training perks to speaking another language.

"If a student is going into health care, it might be important to learn Vietnamese or Korean if it's spoken in the community," she said.

More disturbing to supporters of foreign language education is the 6.7 percent decline in graduate enrollments in foreign languages. While Feal said there are more qualified PhD holders than tenure-track positions in languages, the decrease "may limit avenues of

study for a generation or more."

A thorough accounting of the foreign-language cutbacks at colleges is hard to come by. Robert Peckham, a professor of French at the University of Tennessee at Martin who has been sounding the alarm about the trend, said 70 programs at 39 institutions have either been eliminated or threatened in the last 30 months alone.

In Louisiana, some foreign-language students took part in a mock jazz funeral for the humanities after officials announced the elimination of majors in German and Latin and basic classes in other languages because of state budget cuts.

The similarly budget-challenged State University of New York announced this fall it would no longer let students major in French, Italian and Russian, citing the relatively low number of majors, among other factors.

Effect of music on cognitive function

By MELISSA HEALY
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Playing an instrument seems to make learning math and foreign languages easier, but researchers aren't sure why.

Taylor Bredberg is an ardent fan of the indie band Grizzly Bear and the TV series "Lost," is an amateur filmmaker and a doodler of figures that bring to mind Tim Burton's kinetic grotesques.

But if those interests make him a pretty normal teenager, Bredberg's eight-year relationship with the piano may have made him a little more unusual: He is a kid with the attention span of an anesthesiologist, the persistence and discipline of an Olympic athlete and the emotional range of an artist.

"Piano has shaped me, yeah," says Bredberg, who began taking lessons after his family discovered him, at 7, plinking out on his own the pieces his older sister was learning in lessons. "In terms of discipline and creativity, I'd have been a much different person if I hadn't played piano."

Once a week, Bredberg studies the instrument at the elite Colburn School for Performing Arts in Los Angeles. And he practices for several hours a day, favoring pieces by the Russian composers who are his favorites: Rachmaninoff, Prokofiev, Shostakovich and Stravinsky. When he feels more

delicate, he favors Debussy.

As a freshman, Bredberg has been learning to speak Russian as well, and he finds Algebra 2 a cinch. "It's always been pretty understandable to me. It's very logical," he says. He recognizes the challenge of learning math as one that requires the same methodical patience it takes to learn Prokofiev's 3rd Sonata in A minor, his current project: "I've just gotten used to repeating one phrase until I can play it at the proper speed, and well, and musically," he says. "I guess that can contribute to not getting frustrated after having to repeat so many (math) problems."

Kids like Taylor Bredberg underscore a key problem that researchers have in understanding the link between music-making and cognitive performance. Bredberg hails from the kind of educated family in which music instruction is more common to begin with—an environmental advantage that may account for his particular mental strengths. To truly learn what music-making can do for academic skills, researchers say they must pluck kids from a wider range of family environments and offer them music lessons, rather than just study kids whose families have sought out musical instruction for them. That's the only way they will be able to disentangle the effects of early environment from those of musical instruction, they say.



MCT

Student Taylor Bredberg, 15, is photographed at the piano at Colburn School of Performing Arts, February 23, 2010, in Los Angeles, California. Playing an instrument seems to make learning math and foreign languages easier, but researchers aren't sure why.



MURAL CONTEST WINNER

The Associated Students of the Northern Marianas College recently announced the winner of its mural competition. The purpose of the competition sought to encourage students at NMC to design a mural emphasizing unified diversity at the college. Pictured here on the left is ASNMC president Antonio Tipples presenting a certificate of participation to Francisco Ada, the winner of the mural competition. The winner took home \$200 and secured the opportunity to paint his mural on the Student Center wall.

NMC

Chefs become teachers at Harvard science class

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts (AP)—Dan Barber's culinary skills have earned him a James Beard "Outstanding Chef" award. The food at his New York restaurant Blue Hill was the centerpiece for a Manhattan date night between President Barack Obama and first lady Michelle Obama.

Yet it is his focus on cultivating flavor before foodstuffs even reach his kitchen that put him in an unusual setting recently.

Trading his chef's whites for a loosened tie and sport coat, Barber stood in the well of a Harvard University science hall, delivering a guest lecture as part of the hottest course on campus this fall: Physical Universe 27, or, "Science and Cooking: From Haute Cuisine to Soft Matter Science."

As part of the course, top chefs from around the world, including the current master of the gastronomic universe,

Ferran Adria, chef/owner of Spain's famed elBulli restaurant, have attempted to explain how physics and other sciences influence their cooking.

They also have shown that their cooking, in Adria's case often labeled "molecular gastronomy," can illustrate scientific feats such as spherification, gelation and oxidation. One of Adria's signature dishes is warm, but seemingly miraculously not melted, ice cream. His trick is the additive methylcellulose, a gum that solidifies when it warms rather than cools.

Not exactly a pantry staple. And that's sort of the point.

The goal is to teach science in new and interesting ways, part of the university's effort to revamp its general education offerings. The target audience is not just history majors seeking to satisfy curriculum distribution requirements, but budding scientists

with an equal passion for food.

"If you know this is why you have lemon juice, then you can say, 'Well, lemon juice is here for a certain effect. Are there other things that can substitute for lemon juice if I don't have lemon juice, because I'm just looking for an effect, not necessarily the lemon juice itself?'" said senior Larissa Zhou.

The 22-year-old physics major is one of the course's teaching assistants, reinforcing the work of its two professors. Hundreds of her classmates competed for the 300 spots in the course, and hundreds more have lined up hours early on recent Mondays to attend guest lectures.

They have been delivered by Barber, Adria and other famed chefs such as Grant Achatz of Alinea in Chicago, Jose Andres of Jaleo in Washington and, finally, on Dec. 6, David Chang of momofuku in New York.

Life & Style

Dong Bei Trek PS: MTV for Russkye

By JAIME VERGARA
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

That the signage for Heihe across the Amur River from Blagoveshchensk is exclusively Chinese and Russian is understandable. Heihe is at the end of a Manchurian rail line to the Russian border, and though the river is not that wide, there is no bridge that connects these otherwise joint free trade zone cities, a very telling symbol of the state of foreign relations between the two countries of *perestroika/glasnost*, on the one hand, and cooperation and harmony, on the other.

During the Qing Dynasty, the Amur Oblast was a part of China, recognized by the Tsar in a treaty of 1689, but in the waning days of the Imperial Manchus, the Chinese residents were lorded over with impunity by the ascendant Far East Russia, causing most of the Mongolians to move back south of the Amur.

Now with a ratio of six Russians for every 110 Chinese (Siberia vs. Manchuria), with the superheated Chinese economy eyeing the northern Far East's natural resource of fossil fuel and minerals, one can understand Russia's hesitation to open a free flow of traffic between the two countries. A ferry connects the two cities, and China offered to pay for the cost of constructing a bridge but Moscow drags its feet, apprehensive of neighbor's power of numbers and resurgence.

Heihe copied Russian *matryoshka* dolls for its recycling trash bins, the same way the Panda is copied elsewhere, but Moscow took offense charging that Russians were being treated as 'trash'. It was actually meant to be a gesture of endearment. The frequency of the suitcase traders that buy cheap in China to resell in Russia had since been clipped since foreign exchange favors the Yuan over the Ruble. Blagoveshchensk's waterfront has a vintage WWII cannon in a memorial park pointed at Heihe; the Chinese side has a promenade, very well lit at

Shen zhou bian chui in the left sign means "Divine land border," and the right sign is the location, Heilongjiang pan, the Amur riverbank; left bottom four characters mean "China-Russia boundary" while two right bottom characters is "Heihe." Our trekker freezes by the iced Amur with Blagoveshchensk on background. Inset is one of Russia's own carbon-belching plant beside new hotel construction.



night, and a shopping mall with emblazoned Cyrillic letters big enough to be seen miles away, to lure Russkies with a shopping bent. Derided as a Potemkin village for Beijing's propaganda war cum spotlights gracing the skies like a car dealership hawking used cars, the two countries actually exchanged live ammunition in a shooting war in 1969 over an island in the river.

So it did not come as a surprise when, while searching for the English CCTV 9 in Heihe, we chanced on a Russian MTV. The music format was familiar. What we were not prepared for were the ads: standard Clearasil, Gillette, and Head and Shoulders beamed in the first 15 minutes. Known female hygiene products were also aired without

apology or taint of Victorian prudishness.

As noted in a previous report, the Russya street in Heihe displays a glut of international products, properly labeled in Cyrillic but seemingly all made in China where the world come to take advantage of its cheap factories. It does not matter. Boutique products like those from Milan and Champs Elysees, Nairobi and Cape Town, Rio and Mexico, Tokyo and Seoul, Auckland and Sydney, and supermarket items from the great US of A, with Budweiser now the favored brew in every KTV and bar, are available in this former sleepy river town 20 years ago, now looking like a Toronto in Ontario.

I considered purchasing an inexpensive fake

Mona Lisa until I realized it was probably copied in the Manila. What is clear is that this kind of commercial war is preferable to the one the Kims of *Chosun Koryo* keep alleging the US, Japan and S. Korea are waging from a distance and would like to take to the land of the morning calm. The seeming paranoia out of *Chosun Koryo* is not helped by the avowed foreign policy of regime change that the Bush administration overtly articulated.

In sphere of influence, America's nemesis is not China but Russia, their sibling, like Cain and Abel of the old Mesopotamian story, of common parents but carried contradictions of the herder and the farmer. In this case, the US and Russia's fight is over the care of aging Europe, but this is a family conflict. Happily, Europa declared she has a mind of her own!

In trade and commerce, it is the West (US, EU and Russia) v. China and India. It is the influence of both these eastern most populous nations, on natural resource that the West chauvinistically mined and harvested as a matter of right in the Middle East and Africa, which the West is wary about. Japan, Korea, Taiwan and the rest of the world have already cast their pocket book votes with the East, though their political alignment remains a western façade. China and India spawned the smorgasbord of Indo-Malay-Sino-Polynesian that extends from Madagascar to Tahiti, Hawaii to Tasmania to which the Chamolinian belong.

Toussaint in Hispaniola and Bolivar in Venezuela 200 years ago redefined European colonialism in the Caribbean and Sud America, and this year marks the 50th year anniversary of the independence movements of African nations. It is the Southern sphere of the planet that the East v. West is fighting over, save the terms of conflict has moved from mutual destruction to a common defense against a universal enemy, the carbon ails of planet *Eaarth* (ecologist Bill McKibben's term); we may now dub the Carbon War pitting humanity against itself.

Richard Branson, the maverick entrepreneur of the Virgin Airlines fame just launched a carbon war (www.carbonwarroom.com) to promote low carbon technologies. MTV airs climate warming awareness campaigns, and supporting feminine hygiene products ads notwithstanding, that is good and acceptable in any language.

'Jeopardy' to pit humans against an IBM machine

NEW YORK (AP)—The game show "Jeopardy" will pit man versus machine this winter in a competition that will show how successful scientists are in creating a computer that can mimic human intelligence.

Two of the venerable game show's most successful champions—Ken Jennings and Brad Rutter—will play two games against "Watson," a computer program developed by IBM's artificial intelligence team. The matches will be spread over three days that will air Feb. 14-16, the game show said on Tuesday.

The competition is reminiscent of when IBM developed a chess-playing computer to compete against chess champion Garry Kasparov in 1997.

The "Jeopardy" answer-and-question format is a different kind of challenge. It often requires contestants to deal with subtleties, puns and riddles and come up with answers fast.

"Watson" is named for IBM founder Thomas J. Watson. It will look nothing like the com-

puter "maid" on "The Jetsons." Rather, IBM said its on-screen appearance will be represented by a round avatar.

The computer has already been tested in some 50 games against past "Jeopardy" champions. But neither IBM nor "Jeopardy" representatives would say what "Watson's" record was.

The winner gets a \$1 million prize. IBM said it would donate its winnings to charity, while Jennings and Rutter said they would give half of their prize money away.

Jennings had the game show's longest winning streak, taking 74 games in a row during the 2004-2005 season. Rutter has won more money than any other "Jeopardy" player, nearly \$3.3 million during his original appearance and three subsequent tournaments.

IBM is hoping the technology it exhibits will have some practical uses eventually, for instance helping doctors diagnose illnesses or solving customer problems at technical support centers.

NH parents object to book that calls Jesus vagrant

BEDFORD, N.H. (AP)—A New Hampshire couple told a school board Monday that their son's civil rights were violated when he was assigned a book that refers to Jesus Christ as a "wine-guzzling vagrant and precocious socialist."

The 2001 book, "Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America," documents author Barbara Ehrenreich's attempts to live on minimum wage as she critiques the nation's economic system.

Aimee and Dennis Taylor complained about the book's foul language, descriptions of drug use and characterization of Christianity when it was assigned to their son's personal finance class at Bedford High School in the fall and later pulled him out of school at his request. On Monday, they asked the school board to remove the book from the curriculum and create a committee of parents to review and rate all other books used in the school, but the board held off on making a decision until it hears from its curriculum committee next month.

Dennis Taylor said school officials were either utterly

careless in choosing the book or were "intentionally agreeing with Ehrenreich and taking the position that Jesus was a drunken bum."

"The administration and the people with the master's degrees taking care of our children clearly in this case seemed to lack common sense, common decency and with regard to civil rights, an understanding of common law," he said.

He noted that had the book been turned into a movie, his son would be too young to see it given the obscenities. And both he and his wife said the passages about Jesus were an attack on their son's faith.

In a passage describing a tent revival meeting she attended, Ehrenreich writes about feeling troubled by its emphasis on Jesus' crucifixion and wishing the preacher would focus more on his teachings of social and economic justice.

"Jesus makes his appearance here only as a corpse; the living man, the wine-guzzling vagrant and precocious socialist, is never once mentioned, nor anything he ever had to say," she wrote.

In a "Q&A" section on her

blog, Ehrenreich denies that the passage insults Jesus and points out that the book has won a Christopher Award, given by a Catholic group to recognize books that "affirm the highest values of the human spirit."

"In the section at issue, I observed that the social teachings of Jesus went utterly unmentioned at the tent revival I attended. The revival preachers clearly preferred the dead and risen Christ to the living Jesus—who did indeed drink wine and could even make it out of water," she wrote. "As for the vagrancy charge: that's what he was, a homeless, itinerant preacher."

In response to the Taylors' initial complaint, the district had a committee that included administrators, a teacher and two parents evaluate the book. The panel decided in October that the book's educational merit outweighed its shortcomings, but it instructed teachers to offer an alternative to students whose parents objected.

In November, Superintendent Tim Mayes asked teachers to review the course's curriculum and come up with a better balance of materials to support its

objectives.

"I thought we could seek better balance in terms of covering multiple topics in personal finance, and maybe we were spending too much time on the one topic of working as a minimum wage employee," he said Monday.

The school district's curriculum committee is expected to make a decision based on the teachers' recommendations next month, before the next semester starts in late January. Several board members said they would let that process play out before weighing in on the book's merits.

The board's vice-chairwoman, Cindy Chagnon, said she agreed the book might not be appropriate for a personal finance course but said she viewed the comments about Jesus as positive.

"Her underlying point is not prejudiced against religion. She's saying Christ is a living, breathing lesson for us, let's listen to what he says," she said. "I think this doesn't necessarily belong in personal finance ... but I would not hold anyone on our staff accountable for choosing a bad book. It teaches lessons of the human spirit."

Australia welcomes Oprah to the Sydney Opera House

SYDNEY (AP)—Sydney swapped opera for Oprah on Tuesday when the host brought thousands of shrieking, jubilant fans to the city's landmark arts center to tape two star-studded shows for her final series.

There were celebrities, giveaways and screams-a-plenty as 6,000 Oprah Winfrey devotees jammed the steps of the Sydney Opera House to watch the filming of each show. The production marked the finale of a weeklong trip by the talk show queen and 302 U.S. audience members who took part in "Oprah's Ultimate Australian Adventure."

Winfrey's staffers whipped the already frenzied crowd into a tear-drenched state of hysteria before the host ascended the stage to the sounds of Men At Work's "Down Under," Australia's unofficial anthem.

"HELLOOOO AUSTRALIAAAAA!" she bellowed as the audience's roar reached a deafening pitch. "Now I understand why you call Australia 'Oz,' 'cause we truly are at the end of the yellow brick road!"

Winfrey launched her 25th and final season of "The Oprah Winfrey Show" in September by surprising her audience with her ultimate giveaway: an eight-day trip to Australia. For the past week, the lucky chosen have



In this photo released by Harpo Productions Inc., talk show host Oprah Winfrey, center, chats with actor Russell Crowe, and his wife Danielle Spencer, right, while sailing on Sydney Harbour, Monday, Dec. 13, 2010.

been traveling the continent—snorkeling the Great Barrier Reef, surfing at Sydney's famous Bondi Beach and exploring the rugged Outback.

Winfrey said she had long hoped to travel to Australia, and taking the audience with her made the experience even richer.

"Life is always better when you can share it," she said before the taping.

Four shows from Winfrey's Aussie adventure will screen in

January and are expected to be watched by millions of people in 145 countries.

The state and federal governments have spent around \$5 million on the trip, a price that has drawn criticism from some Australians. But officials and Winfrey herself insist the shows will bring many millions more in tourism publicity.

"It is immeasurable what four hours of a love festival about your country broadcast in 145

countries around the world can do," Winfrey told reporters.

And a love festival it was, with Winfrey lavishing praise on her Australian hosts, the scenery and the citizens.

"You're so darn friendly, you must go to friendly class!" she told the crowd, who were randomly selected from a pool of 350,000 hopefuls.

Her first guest was Australian actor Russell Crowe, who gave a nod to the surrounding sun-

dappled harbor and said, "When you live in a city like this, it's not that hard to be friendly."

The nearby Harbour Bridge had been decorated with a giant "O" made of red lights—first illuminated during a fireworks display thrown in Winfrey's honor earlier in her trip.

"When we (saw) the fireworks and that 'O' came over the bridge, I went into the 'ugly cry,'" she told reporters. "That was a really amazing moment. I had an 'O' on the BRIDGE—on the Sydney Harbour Bridge!"

The family of the late "Crocodyile Hunter" Steve Irwin also made an emotional appearance on the program. Daughter Bindi walked on stage with a python named "Olivia" draped around her shoulders, assuring Winfrey "She's really sweet!" as the host tentatively stroked the reptile.

Seven-year-old Robert Irwin told Winfrey he watches videos of his father—who was killed by a stingray barb in 2006—every day.

"It's so good because it's like he's actually there," he said, reducing mother Terri Irwin and many in the crowd to tears.

"Living with Steve was like standing in a cyclone," Terri said, eyes watering. "Then we lost him. It was like the wind stopped."

Winfrey, famed for her giveaways, had plenty up her sleeve,

including a \$250,000 check for a cancer-stricken Australian man and his family, who have been struggling to pay their bills.

Hip hop artist Jay-Z, who also appeared on the show, stopped by a local boys' school after one of their teachers wrote to Winfrey and told her how much the students loved the rapper. The students, most of whom are from low-income families, were invited to watch the show's taping from inside the Opera House, and a live feed shown on the stage caught their reaction as Winfrey told them they would all be receiving free laptops.

"Now, no excuses not to do your homework!" Winfrey shouted as the students began leaping up and down, fists pumped in the air.

She didn't stop there. After the crowd had danced itself to exhaustion during Bon Jovi's performance of "Livin' On a Prayer," all 6,000 were informed they would be receiving a commemorative necklace made of native Australian pearls. (Cue the screaming.)

Winfrey said she plans to return to Australia, calling it a "magical, wondrous, wondrous place."

"It has been an experience unparalleled," she told reporters. "I will be back. And when I come back, you won't know it. I'm going to sneak in next time."

New York Film Critics pick 'Social Network'

NEW YORK (AP)—"The Social Network" continued its virtual sweep of the early awards season, earning best film from the New York Film Critics Circle. David Fincher, director of the Facebook drama, won best director in the awards, announced Monday. The New York critics followed the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, the National Board of Review and the New York Film Critics Online in choosing "The Social Network" as the year's best film.

The NYFCC awarded best actor to Colin Firth for the British monarchy tale "The King's Speech" and best actress to

Annette Bening for the lesbian family drama "The Kids Are All Right."

The New York critics were particularly high on "The Kids Are All Right," honoring Mark Ruffalo for best supporting actor and Lisa Cholodenko and Stuart Blumberg for best screenplay.

Melissa Leo won best supporting actress for her performance in the boxing drama "The Fighter."

"Black Swan," which on Sunday picked up a record 12 nominations from the Critics' Choice Movie Awards, was awarded best cinematography for the work by Matthew Libatique.

The New York reviewers are among the influential critics groups that suggest potential favorites ahead of the Feb. 27 Academy Awards. The Oscar race will get a strong injection of drama Tuesday morning when the Golden Globes nominations are announced.

The NYFCC, which was founded in 1935, will present its awards at a Jan. 10 event in New York. A collection of newspaper, magazine and online critics, it describes its annual awards as "a principled alternative to the Oscars, honoring esthetic merit in a forum that is immune to commercial and political pressures."

Warhol group threatens to end Smithsonian funding

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Andy Warhol Foundation said Monday it will withhold future funding to the Smithsonian Institution unless a video removed from the National Portrait Gallery after a Catholic group complained is restored.

Joel Wachs, president of the foundation, said its board voted Friday to demand the video by late artist David Wojnarowicz—which depicts ants crawling on a crucifix—be reinstalled at the gallery. The board sent a letter and e-mail Monday to Smithsonian Secretary Wayne Clough.

The Warhol Foundation has been proud a supporter of the current Portrait Gallery exhibit "Hide/Seek: Difference and Desire in American Portraiture,"

Wachs wrote. It is the first major museum exhibit to explore the impact of sexual orientation on art history.

"Such blatant censorship is unconscionable," he wrote. "We cannot stand by and watch the Smithsonian bow to the demands of bigots who have attacked the exhibition out of ignorance, hatred and fear."

"For the arts to flourish the arts must be free," Wachs wrote.

The foundation says it has given \$375,000 over the past three years to various Smithsonian museums, including \$100,000 to help fund "Hide/Seek," from which the video was removed.

Other museums and galleries in New York, Washington

and Los Angeles have rushed to show the video in protest of its removal by the Smithsonian on Nov. 30. The Association of Art Museum Directors also has condemned the Smithsonian's removal of the piece.

Clough said in a statement Monday that the Smithsonian won't show the video again.

"While we regret the foundation's action, the Smithsonian's decision to remove the video was a difficult one and we stand by it," he said. "The 104 works of the 'Hide/Seek' exhibition will remain on view at the National Portrait Gallery."

The museum has said the video became a distraction from the larger themes of the exhibit, which opened in late October.

Rapper Ja Rule pleads guilty in '07 NY weapon case

NEW YORK (AP)—Ja Rule agreed Monday to go to prison for two years in a gun case, becoming the second platinum-selling rapper set to do time after arrests in the aftermath of a star-studded hip-hop concert in July 2007.

The rapper-actor—whose gravelly voice, thugish tough talk and duets with R&B divas made him one of rap's stars in the early 2000s—pleaded guilty to attempted criminal possession of a weapon. Superstar Lil Wayne was arrested separately the same night and later pleaded guilty to the same charge.

Speaking in a low voice, Ja Rule said nothing beyond "guilty" and "yes" to a Manhattan judge's questions as he admitted to a charge that involves attempting to have a loaded gun outside one's home or workplace. Police said they found a loaded .40-caliber semi-automatic gun in a rear door of his \$250,000-plus Maybach after it was stopped for speeding.

His plea deal promises the 34-year-old rapper a two-year prison term compared to the 15-year stint he could have faced if convicted of the original gun charges. He remains free until his sentencing.

"This isn't a good day," Ja Rule said as he headed to a waiting SUV,

Rapper Ja Rule leaves court in New York, Monday, Dec. 13, 2010.

waving to some fans who recognized him behind his dark sunglasses. His lawyer, Stacey Richman, declined to comment.

He's due in court Feb. 9 to set a date for his sentencing.

"Because of your guilty plea here today, you'll have a record of having committed a violent felony. This is a very serious matter," Manhattan state Supreme Court Justice Richard Carruthers told him Monday.

Ja Rule is the latest in a series of big-name rappers poised for incarceration, a lineup that has raised questions about the line between art and reality in a genre rife with tales of gang life. Hip-hop stars including Tupac Shakur, Lil' Kim, Foxy Brown, Shyne, Mystikal, Gucci Mane and T.I. have been in jail or prison for periods ranging from months to years. Lil Wayne spent eight months in a New York City jail earlier this year.

He and Ja Rule were stopped, separately, after leaving the Beacon Theatre on July 22, 2007. Lil Wayne had just headlined a show there featuring other rappers including Ja Rule; the two had recently joined forces on a single called "Uh Oh."

About an hour after Ja Rule's car was pulled over, Lil Wayne's tour bus was stopped about a mile away. He admitted last year that he had a loaded, semiautomatic .40-caliber gun on the bus.

Lil Wayne, 28, was sentenced in March to a year in jail, gaining early release last month because of time off for good behavior.



Bullock, Bridges, Berry to present at Oscars

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Academy Awards winners Sandra Bullock, Jeff Bridges, Halle Berry and Marisa Tomei are among stars appearing on the next Oscar show, along with past nominee Oprah Winfrey.

Academy overseers announced Monday that all five will serve as presenters on the Feb. 27 telecast.

At the last Oscars, five-time nominee Bridges won the best-actor prize for "Cra-

zy Heart," while Bullock won best actress for "The Blind Side."

Berry was named best actress for 2001's "Monster's Ball." Three-time nominee Tomei received the supporting-actress

Oscar for 1992's "My Cousin Vinny."

Winfrey earned a supporting-actress nomination for 1985's "The Color Purple."

Nominations for the 83rd Oscars are due out Jan. 25

Brunei prince's NY court fight with lawyers near end

NEW YORK (AP)—Brunei's flamboyant Prince Jefri Bolkiah tried to play by his own "royal rules" in dealing with two British lawyers he has accused of stealing from him, one of their attorneys said Monday as a trial in the globe-trotting, multimillion-dollar dispute neared its end.

Lawyers for attorneys Faith Zaman Derbyshire and Thomas Derbyshire made closing arguments Monday in the five-week-long trial. The case has become a tabloid staple by opening a window on the prince's outlandish lifestyle—including some sexually explicit, life-sized, custom-made statues he once kept at an estate on New York's Long Island.

The prince's lawyers were due to give their summations Tuesday.

Jefri is the so-called "playboy prince" of one of the world's richest royal families. He's the youngest brother of the sultan of oil-rich Brunei.

Jefri says the Derbyshires, a husband-and-wife legal team, exploited their access to his business affairs to steal about \$7 million from him. The prince's camp says they embezzled by doing everything from using his money to buy themselves a home in Manhattan Beach, Calif., to charging beauty treatments and other personal luxuries to his corporate credit cards.

Ex-TV chef gets 9 years in plot to kill wife

LOS ANGELES (AP)—With a wink and smile at his wife, former "Calorie Commando" TV chef Juan-Carlos Cruz was sentenced to nine years in prison Monday for trying to hire two homeless men to murder her.

Looking considerably grayer than he did during his arrest in May, Cruz turned to catch one more glimpse of his wife Jennifer Campbell as he was led from the brief hearing. She was seated in the front row of the courtroom with her attorney.

In a plea agreement reached

shortly before a pretrial hearing was to begin in October, Cruz, 48, pleaded no contest to a charge of solicitation of murder, and prosecutors dropped a more serious count of attempted murder.

The agreement called for a nine-year prison sentence.

During sentencing, which lasted about five minutes, defense attorney Shawn Chapman Holley said Cruz is expected to serve half of the nine-year term because no serious, violent felony was committed.



SHE HAS ARRIVED!

Actress Gwyneth Paltrow touches her star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame during dedication ceremonies in Los Angeles Monday, Dec. 13, 2010. Faith Hill and Tim McGraw were on hand Monday to help Paltrow celebrate the unveiling of her star on the sidewalk outside Madame Tussauds celebrity wax museum. Paltrow won the best actress Academy Award for her role in 1998's "Shakespeare in Love." The 38-year-old actress also had roles in the "Iron Man" movies, "Two Lovers," "The Good Night," "Proof," "Sylvia," "The Talented Mr. Ripley," "The Royal Tenenbaums," "Emma," and "Jeferson in Paris."

Fear of AIDS haunts future for woman with risky past

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: I am a 34-year-old woman who finally beat a 13-year battle with drugs. I now have a job, a car, a place of my own and a bank account. My problem is, while I was on drugs I prostituted myself in order to support my habit. Now I'm terrified I have AIDS, and afraid I'll be told I don't have long to live.

I'm not dating right now, but I've had a couple of boyfriends since getting sober. I'm scared for them, but so afraid of getting a death sentence that I've never mentioned my fears to anyone. I know I'm being selfish with these guys' lives, but I'm paralyzed by my fear. What am I going to do?

TERRIFIED IN THE U.S.A.

DEAR TERRIFIED: What you are going to do is get yourself tested! Please understand that the fear you are dealing with is the same that anyone who has had multiple sex partners has had to face.

You must realize that being exposed to HIV and having AIDS are not the same. If you have been exposed to HIV—and therefore test "positive"—you need to know it ASAP so you can be prescribed anti-viral medications that can PREVENT you from getting AIDS. Getting on those meds can save your life. And you can save the lives of your former boyfriends, too, if you are HIV positive, by telling them to get tested.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have known my husband for eight years and have been married to him for three. He is a unique and funny man, but he does have a few annoying quirks. The biggest one, and the reason I'm writing to you, is his need to have music blaring in our car.

It's not just when we're driving, but also when we're going through drive-thru restaurants, banks and gas stations. Gas stations are the worst because he turns the volume up even louder so he can hear it outside. Not only is it painful to my ears, but it's embarrassing.

I have asked him a number of times to turn it down, but it just leads to arguments. Can you help me talk to him before I lose my hearing?

BLEEDING EARS IN SPRING VALLEY, CALIF.

DEAR BLEEDING EARS: Could it be that your husband suffers from hearing loss (probably from listening to too-loud music), which is why he needs the volume turned up so high? Arguing with him won't help. He should be checked by an audiologist—a hearing specialist—so that he doesn't damage his hearing further, and yours won't be affected.

Protecting your hearing is important. That's why you should consider using ear plugs when you drive with him.

P.S. And when you get to the gas station, offer to pump the gas for him. If he refuses, then leave the car with him.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My husband is 7 feet tall and we recently became parents of a beautiful baby girl. Everywhere we go, people make comments about my husband's height. He is used to being the target of stares and comments, having experienced it his whole life. Our daughter may grow up to be tall; how would you handle this?

ANGELA IN BETHLEHEM, PA.

DEAR ANGELA: I would teach my daughter—regardless of her height—to be proud of who she is. If your daughter turns out to be tall, she'll have plenty of company, because each generation seems to be growing taller than the last one. A woman's height does not have to be a disadvantage unless she views it that way. If you stress the qualities you feel are important, chances are that's the person she'll grow up to be.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby—Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Ex-first daughter Jenna Bush Hager moves to NYC

NEW YORK (AP)—Former first daughter Jenna Bush Hager has moved to New York City, where she'll continue working as a contributing correspondent for NBC's "Today" show. Show spokeswoman Megan Kopf confirmed Monday that the twin daughter of former President George W. Bush and her husband had moved to the city recently. Kopf says the network is "thrilled" Hager will be near the station's headquarters. The announcement comes after recent reports that the 29-year-old's Baltimore home was up for sale for \$474,900. Hager has been a correspondent for the morning show since 2009. She has covered a variety of subjects, including education and the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. Hager previously wrote a children's book and worked for UNICEF.

Ferrell, Reilly parody classic Christmas duet

NEW YORK (AP)—Will Ferrell and John C. Reilly have added a comedic twist to David

Bowie and Bing Crosby's classic Christmas duet. The video was posted Monday by Funny or Die. It's a remarkable, comedic imitation of Crosby and Bowie's beloved 1977 Christmas special in which they sang "Peace on Earth/The Little Drummer Boy." In it, Ferrell plays Bowie and Reilly performs as Crosby. The mimicry is impressive, with almost every line exactly repeated. Reilly fittingly dons a V-neck sweater, and Ferrell sports Bowie's blue blazer and a British accent. The two stay faithfully in character until the end, when they curse at each other and Ferrell knocks over a Christmas tree. The video had gotten 135,000 hits by Monday night.

Natalie Portman producing gross-out girl movies

NEW YORK (AP)—Natalie Portman thinks gross-out, juvenile humor isn't just for guys. She believes women appreciate lewd humor, too. In the January 2011 issue of Vogue magazine, the Academy Award-nominated actress says she's started her own production company and

is interested in making comedic films like "The Hangover" for women. In the article, Portman says women are typically "not allowed" to be "beautiful and funny." She also believes it's frowned upon for females to be vulgar. Her latest movie "Black Swan" is now in theaters. The January issue of Vogue goes on sale nationwide December 21.

NBC introducing new singing competition format

NEW YORK (AP)—NBC is banking on some reality show royalty to create a new singing competition to challenge "American Idol." The network said Monday that it will debut "The Voice of America" in the spring. Its format is based on a popular show in Holland where celebrities are paired with amateur singers in competition. The twist is the celebrities must pick their teams based solely on hearing their voices without seeing what the contestants look like. "Survivor" producer Mark Burnett and "Big Brother" producer John De Mol will work together on the series. NBC says it's not

yet clear whether the show will compete directly with Fox's "American Idol," which traditionally ends its season in May. NBC usually airs the popular "America's Got Talent" competition in the summer.

Dawson, Harmon to announce SAG noms

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Rosario Dawson and Angie Harmon will join JoBeth Williams to announce the nominees for the 17th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards. Executive producer Jeff Margolis announced the presenters in a statement Monday night. The SAG Awards nominations in five film and eight television categories will be announced on Thursday at the Pacific Design Center in West Hollywood. Dawson is currently starring opposite Denzel Washington in the action thriller "Unstoppable." Harmon plays Boston detective Jane Rizzoli on the TNT series "Rizzoli & Isles." The awards ceremony will be simulcast live coast-to-coast on TNT and TBS on Jan. 30 at 8 p.m. EST from the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles.

Favre-less Vikings dominated by Giants



DETROIT (AP)—Brett Favre's streak is over.

His career might be, too.

Favre stood on the sideline for the start of a game for the first time since 1992, rubbing his salt-and-pepper beard in frustration because his body couldn't take another pounding. The New York Giants made sure his replacement struggled early and often in a 21-3 victory over the Minnesota Vikings.

"I am not going to play again if I can't feel my hand," the 41-year-old Favre said after sitting out with a right shoulder injury that has made his hand numb. His NFL record streak of 297 straight starts was finished, and Favre couldn't say if he would suit up again.

"That's questions I haven't thought about, to be quite honest with you," he said. "I've always assumed I'd play every game, today was no exception. I enjoy playing."

"I don't want to say I'm shocked by the events of today. I guess in some way I expected it ... but I have no idea. It's unfortunate we're out of this play-off race. I'll just see how I feel this week and go from there."

Vikings interim coach Leslie Frazier acknowledged that putting Favre on injured reserve, ending his season and possibly his career is possible.

"But I'm hoping not," Frazier said.

Favre previously has said he will indeed retire for good after this season.

"At least I won't look back and say, 'I wonder if I played could we have done this or that,'" he said Monday night. "We know now."

Brandon Jacobs ran for a go-ahead touchdown midway through the second quarter, Eli Manning threw a lead-padding TD just before halftime and Ahmad Bradshaw added a 48-yard run for the Giants. The game was moved from Minneapolis to the Motor City because the Metrodome roof collapsed under heavy snow early Sunday.

Manning, whose brother, Peyton, now has the longest starting streak for a QB at 205 games, said he was shocked when he found out Favre was inactive.

"You don't know if this is the end for a guy who has done so much for the NFL," Manning said.

The Giants sacked Favre replacement Tarvaris Jackson four times, knocking him out of the game late in the third period and again in the final seconds.

New York (9-4) moved back into a first-place tie with Philadelphia in the NFC East. The Giants have won three straight and eight of 10 games, improving their chances for a wild card if they doesn't finish ahead of the Eagles, who they host Sunday.

"We're going to have to be resilient again this week because we've got a short week before a big game against the Eagles," Giants coach Tom Coughlin said. "They had a nice win yesterday, and we had to match them."

The Vikings (5-8) were eliminated from the playoff race after entering the game with a two-game winning streak and flickering hopes of salvaging what has been a miserable season that started with high hopes after Favre led them to the NFC title game.

"It's embarrassing," defensive end Jared Allen said.

The game was switched from Sunday afternoon when the Giants couldn't get to Minneapolis because of the se-



Minnesota Vikings quarterback Brett Favre, right, greets New York Giants quarterback Eli Manning after their NFL football game at Ford Field in Detroit, Monday, Dec. 13, 2010.

vere weather, then was pushed back another day and moved to the Detroit Lions' indoor stadium with a steel roof. The Vikings were technically the home team at Ford Field—which was adorned with their logo at midfield and "VIKINGS" in the end zones—but they didn't have much of an edge.

"The whole thing is bizarre," Vikings radio analyst Pete Bercich said.

Nothing, though, was more odd than seeing Favre watch a game.

He stood on the sideline, trying to tutor Jackson at times, and sported a purple knit hat, short-sleeved black shirt with a long-sleeved white shirt underneath and black warmup pants.

"It's been a great run, I will not hang my head one bit because it ended today," Favre said. "I think about as a kid goals and dreams, I have far exceeded all of those. I never dreamed of playing 300-plus straight games (including playoffs). I dreamed of playing in the NFL."

The game drew an announced crowd of 45,910—there seemed to be at least 10,000 more people in the 65,000-seat stadium late in the first half—and some fans made the trek to specifically see Favre.

"I'm devastated," said 20-year-old fan James Burton, who left his home in Ohio at 3 a.m. ET Monday to get one of the 30,000 free tickets that were distributed.

Even though most got in for free, they left disappointed, especially if they were rooting for the Vikings.

Jackson got off to a good start, completing his first two passes for 8 yards each, but didn't do much to help his team for the rest of the night.

"I was very pleased with the way the defense bailed us out after two early

turnovers," Coughlin said.

Jackson wasted an opportunity to show his coaches and teammates he can be counted on to fill in for Favre for a game and perhaps in the future.

He completed just 12 of 22 passes, threw an interception directly to linebacker Keith Bulluck, and fumbled a shotgun snap he was able to recover. Another shotgun snap got away and he recovered it near the goal line, seemingly getting a break from the officials on what appeared to be a safety.

Jackson limped off the field with 16 seconds left in the game, giving rookie Joe Webb another opportunity to take snaps after getting drafted in the sixth round to play wide receiver. Jackson leaned heavily on a railing to get up steps toward the locker room.

While Jackson didn't have the benefit of a running game—Adrian Peterson was held to 26 yards on 14 carries—Manning relied on a one-two punch that pounded the Vikings all night.

Jacobs ran for a season-high 116 yards—including a career-high 73-yard run—and a score. Bradshaw had 103 yards rushing, including the 48-yarder that was his longest run in two years, before leaving the game with a wrist injury in the fourth quarter.

Manning bounced back from throwing a second interception in the opening minute of the second quarter by completing 22 of 37 passes for 187 yards and a TD on a perfectly threaded pass to Kevin Boss. That put the Giants ahead 14-3 with 3 seconds left in the third quarter.

Ravens 34, Texans 28

At Houston, the Baltimore Ravens almost blew another one, until their trademark defense saved the game.

Josh Wilson intercepted Matt Schaub's pass and returned it 12 yards for a touchdown in overtime, lifting the Ravens to a win over the Houston Texans.

The Ravens (9-4) stayed one game behind Pittsburgh in the AFC North despite blowing a 28-7 lead in the second half.

"There's always plays that define where you go," linebacker Ray Lewis said. "For us to get that win the way we got it, I'm telling you, if you're not happy, there's something wrong with you."

Schaub threw a 5-yard touchdown pass to Andre Johnson and a 2-point conversion to Jacoby Jones with 21 seconds left in regulation to cap the unlikely rally.

Baltimore lost fourth-quarter leads in each of its four losses and had to punt after its only offensive series of overtime. Houston started from its 12, and Schaub was trying to connect with Jones on second down when Wilson picked it off and ran into the end zone.

"I still kind of can't believe that really happened," Wilson said. "I was just saying 'Catch the ball, catch the ball, catch the ball,' and game over."

Houston (5-8) has lost six of its last seven.

The Ravens seemed to have the game well in hand when rookie David Reed returned the second-half kickoff 103 yards for a touchdown, a franchise record.

Houston mounted two time-consuming drives in the third quarter, but only came away with field goals. Yet the Texans' defense, ranked among the league's worst in every category, held the Ravens to four first downs in the second half and kept Houston's come-

back hopes flickering.

The Texans' offense finally came alive after a listless first half. Schaub went 24 for 41 in the last two quarters after going 7 for 21 in the first half.

He threw a 7-yard touchdown pass to Jones with 6 minutes left to finish a 99-yard drive, the longest in team history.

The defense forced another Baltimore punt with 2:54 left, and Schaub launched the tying drive with a 16-yard completion to Kevin Walter. Schaub went 8 for 10 in the 95-yard march, and also scrambled for a first down.

Johnson managed to keep his toes inbounds on the spectacular 5-yard touchdown reception that made it 28-26, and Jones grabbed Houston's first 2-point conversion of the year to tie it.

"This football team has lost a lot of close games by some crazy situations," Baltimore coach John Harbaugh said. "Now you're down here playing Monday night football and this place was electric. We quieted it down for a little while but obviously it got amped up in the second half."

The Texans had lost fourth-quarter leads in their previous four losses, all because the defense gave up long pass plays.

This time, the usually reliable Schaub made the late-game mistake that cost Houston a chance to win.

The Ravens seemed as relieved as they were thrilled after Wilson scored. Players on the sideline stormed onto the field, while linebacker Terrell Suggs took off his helmet and walked up to Schaub for a quick conversation. Ravens quarterback Joe Flacco also sought out Schaub and shook his hand.

Flacco threw two touchdown passes to Derrick Mason and Willis McGahee also scored in the first half.

On Mason's second score, he side-stepped Jason Allen, then came out of his left shoe on a 26-yard reception just under 2 minutes before halftime. That score, making it 21-0, was set up when Chris Carr picked off a deflected pass from Schaub.

While Baltimore's offense found its stride for the first time in two weeks, the defense was its usual stingy self until the late-game struggles.

Schaub was 7 for 21 in the first half, and star receiver Johnson didn't make a catch until the final 90 seconds. The Texans were 1 for 7 on third-down conversions in the first half.

Johnson got Houston's offense going when he grabbed a 46-yard pass from Schaub for a touchdown less than a minute before halftime to get Houston within 21-7.

Reed seemed to end any chance for a Houston comeback when he fought through Texans tacklers, raced down the sideline and somersaulted across the goal line on his kickoff return.

Reed's home was raided by police last week to investigate potential drug activity, but no charges have been filed.

The Texans settled for a 24-yard field goal by Neil Rackers that made it 28-10 with about 7 minutes left in the third quarter after Jones dropped a ball in the end zone. Rackers kicked another field goal, this one for 42 yards, near the end of the third quarter to make it 28-13.

That field goal came after Walter was ruled out of bounds on a catch in the end zone and the play was upheld on review.

Heat beat Hornets for 9th straight victory



MIAMI (AP)—By recent Miami Heat standards, Monday night's win counts as close.

The Heat trailed early and waited until the end of the third quarter to make their move, winning by double figures for the ninth game in a row by beating New Orleans 96-84.

Dwyane Wade scored 32 points, topping 30 for the third consecutive game, and Chris Bosh added 23 points and 11 rebounds. The Heat blew the game open with an 18-2 spurt that put them up 94-77.

LeBron James had 20 points and seven assists for Miami, back home after a four-game road sweep. Wade had an especially efficient night: 8 for 13 from the field and 14 of 17 from the free-throw line.

While the Heat roll, New Orleans continues to struggle. With a loss for the second day in a row, the Hornets fell to 3-9 since an 11-1 start. They haven't scored 100 points since Nov. 19, a stretch of 13 games.

David West had 26 points and 12 rebounds for the Hornets, who went 1 for 13 from 3-point range.

The teams split the season series. New Orleans beat Miami 96-93 on Nov. 5.

Miami is now the sixth team in NBA history to win nine straight games by at least 10 points or more. And James has had a hand in two of those runs—Cleveland was the last team to do it, between Nov. 22 and Dec. 9, 2008.

The 2007-08 Boston Celtics also won nine straight by double figures. The Heat have won nine in a row since Nov. 29, when they shook a slump during which they had lost four of five.

The Heat are having fun during their run. With the victory secure and five minutes left, James slashed into the lane and passed the ball from one hand to the other behind his back—a classic junior-high move that brought a roar. Then he shot and missed, and fans groaned.

Earlier, when James banked in a runner as he was fouled, he threw a fist and shouted at the roaring crowd.

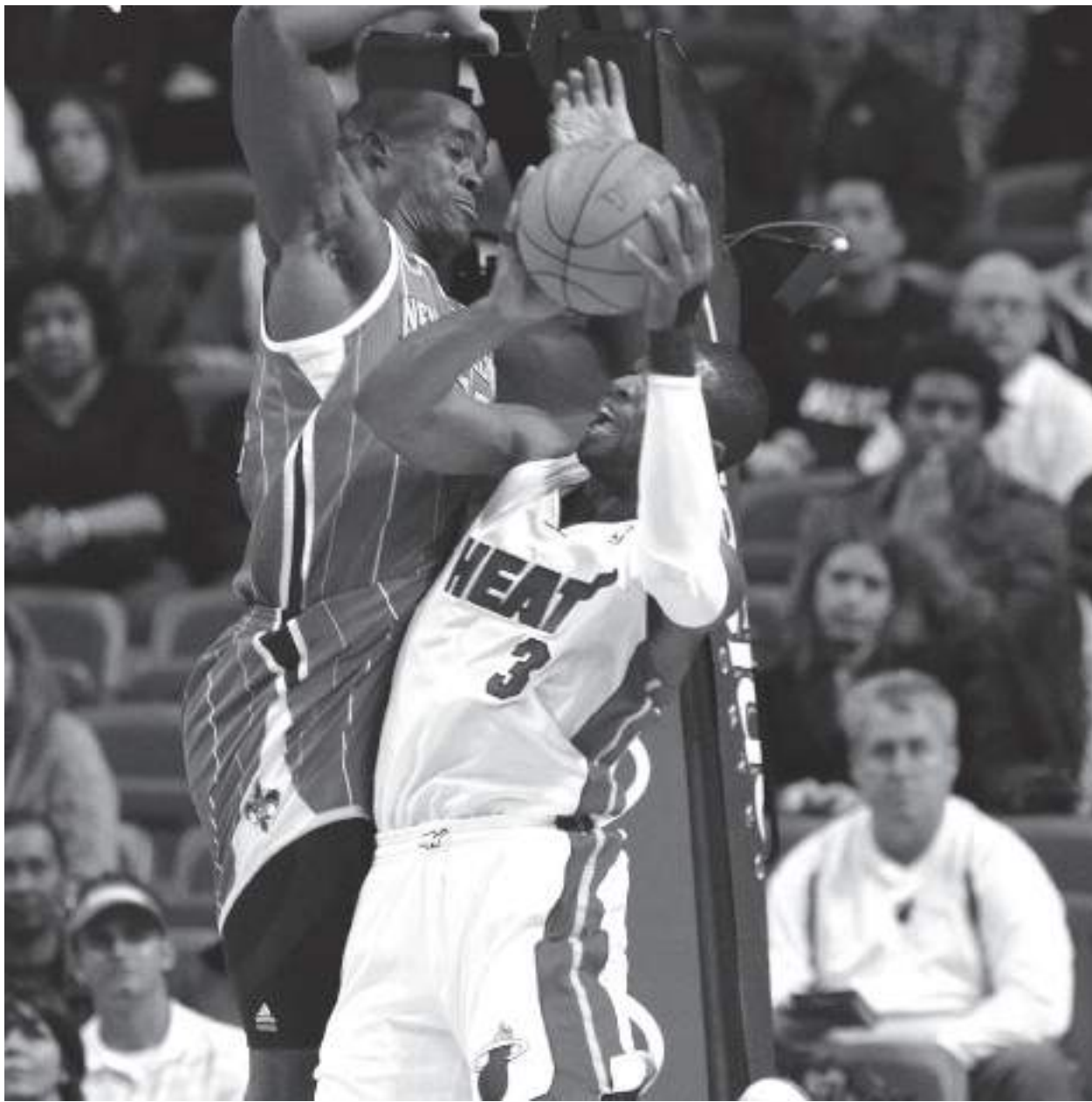
A knockout punch? Pretty much. The score put the Heat ahead 82-75, their biggest lead to that point. Wilting under Miami's defensive pressure, the Hornets committed five turnovers in the first five minutes of the fourth quarter as the Heat pulled away.

Miami's most jaw-dropping play of the night was a basket by James, who found himself pinned against the baseline with the shot clock about to expire, whirled and launched a jumper from behind the backboard that went swish.

Wade, miffed about taking a hard foul from Jarrett Jack, scored 20 points in the second quarter, a Heat record for the period. That included his team's final 11 points to cut New Orleans' half-time lead to 54-53.

Only three teams—the 2007-08 Houston Rockets, 2003-04 New Jersey Nets and 1946-47 Washington Capitols—have won 10 straight by at least 10 points, and the Heat will try to match the NBA record Wednesday.

Their opponent for that one? Cleveland, a team Miami beat by 28 points earlier this month in James' much-awaited return to the city he scorned by signing with the Heat this past summer. James scored 38 points in Miami's blowout win at the arena he called



New Orleans Hornets' Emeka Okafor (50) tries to block Miami Heat's Dwyane Wade (3) during the first half of a NBA basketball game in Miami, Monday, Dec. 13, 2010. AP

home for his first seven NBA seasons.

Unlike the Dec. 2 game, what awaits Wednesday won't require the Heat and league to take extra security measures or worry how a sellout

crowd will react.

Bulls 92, Pacers 73

At Chicago, Carlos Boozer had 22 points and 18 rebounds, and Derrick

Rose added 17 points and 12 assists as Chicago got its first six-game winning streak since Nov. 25-Dec. 8, 2006.

The 73 points was a season-low for Indiana and it was the third straight

game Chicago held its opponent to a season-worst total. The Bulls held the Los Angeles Lakers to 84 points on Friday and the Minnesota Timberwolves to 82 points on Saturday.

Brandon Rush and T.J. Ford both had 13 points for Indiana.

Bucks 103, Mavericks 99

At Dallas, Brandon Jennings had 23 points and 10 assists, and Milwaukee rallied from a 20-point second-quarter deficit to end Dallas' 12-game winning streak.

Andrew Bogut had 21 points and 14 rebounds, and Keyon Dooling added 16 points for the Bucks, who won their fourth in five games.

Dirk Nowitzki scored 30 points and Shawn Marion had 14 for the Mavericks. Bulls 92,

Jazz 108, Warriors 95

At Salt Lake City, Deron Williams scored 30 points, and reserve C.J. Miles had 20 points and six rebounds as Utah sent Golden State to its seventh straight loss.

Paul Millsap added 16 points for Utah, including 10 points in the third quarter when the Jazz outscored the Warriors 31-24 to take a 74-70 lead.

Dorell Wright led Golden State with 20 points, including four 3-pointers. Reggie Williams added 10 for the Warriors.

Grizzlies 86, Trail Blazers 73

At Memphis, Tennessee, Zach Randolph had 25 points and 20 rebounds, and Rudy Gay added 16 points to lead Memphis to its third straight win.

The victory snapped an eight-game winning streak for Portland in Memphis.

Wesley Matthews scored 18 points and Andre Miller had 14 points and nine assists for Portland, which lost its second straight after a four-game winning streak.

Source: Lee agrees to \$100M deal with Phils



NEW YORK

(AP)—Turns out the Philadelphia Phillies do have enough money for both Cliff Lee and Roy Halladay—and Roy Oswalt and Cole Hamels, too.

A year after Phillies traded him away, Lee chose to rejoin them and form a fearsome foursome that is the envy of all of baseball.

The free-agent pitcher passed up an extra \$50 million from the New York Yankees and reached a preliminary agreement on a \$100 million, five-year contract with the Phillies on Monday night, a person familiar with the deal told The Associated Press.

The agreement is subject to the 32-year-old left-hander passing a physical, the person said on condition of anonymity because the agreement was not final.

The Yankees and Texas Rangers had been considered the front-runners, but the Phillies wound up with the most-prized free agent of the offseason, reaching a deal that gives them a dominant rotation that likely is the strongest in the majors.

Lee, the 2008 AL Cy Young Award winner, joins Halladay, a two-time Cy Young Award winner who won the NL honor last month.

After Lee helped the defending champion Phillies reach the 2009 World Series, he was sent to Seattle in a four-team, nine-player trade last Dec. 16 that brought Halladay to Philadelphia. Halladay signed a new contract that added \$60 million over three seasons, the same average salary Lee will get.

Seattle traded Lee to Texas in July, and Lee pitched the Rangers into the World Series for the first time.

The Phillies have been considering trading pitcher Joe Blanton and/or outfielder Raul Ibanez to clear payroll space, a person familiar with Philadelphia's deliberations said. That person spoke on condition of anonymity because those talks were ongoing.

Lee and his family had a good time during his stay with the Phillies, who acquired him from Cleveland in July 2009.

"At first, I didn't believe it. I thought we were working out an extension with the Phillies," Lee said the day after the trade. "I thought I'd be spending the rest of my career there. ... I was under the impression they wanted to keep me there for a long time. In my mind, it was going to happen."

After advancing to the World Series in consecutive years, the Phillies were upset by the eventual champion

San Francisco Giants in this year's NL championship series. Earlier this month, outfielder Jayson Werth left Philadelphia for a \$126 million, seven-year contract with the Washington Nationals.

The Yankees and Texas received telephone calls Monday night telling them they were out of the running, two separate people familiar with those team's negotiations said, also on condition of anonymity.

New York had started with a \$138 million, six-year offer to Lee, the person familiar with the Yankees' negotiations said. After outfielder Carl Crawford agreed to a seven-year, \$142 million deal with the Boston Red Sox, New York immediately increased its offer to Lee to \$150 million over seven seasons, the person said.

Lee's wife felt insulted by fans at Yankee Stadium who were rude to her and Rangers family members during the ALCS. It was unclear whether that played a part in the decision.

A fourth-round draft pick in 2000, Lee is 102-61 with a 3.85 ERA in nine major league seasons. He has excelled in the postseason, going 7-2 with a 2.13 ERA for Philadelphia and Texas in the past two years, including 3-0 with a 1.88 ERA against the Yankees.

Lee won 18 games for Cleveland in 2005, then got hurt in spring training in 2007 and was demoted to the minors. He returned to the big leagues, finished 5-8 with a 6.29 ERA and was left off Cleveland's postseason roster. He rebounded to go 22-3 with a 2.54 ERA in 2008 and was voted the AL Cy Young Award.

He was 14-13 for the Indians and Phillies in 2009, and 12-9 for the Seattle Mariners and Rangers this year.

With Lee's departure, the Rangers could move closer Neftali Feliz from the bullpen to the rotation and may attempt to acquire 2009 AL Cy Young Award winner Zack Greinke in a trade from the Kansas City Royals.

This was a rare instance in which the Yankees' financial might failed to land a player they wanted. After losing to Texas in the AL championship series, they are seeking to add pitching to a rotation that includes CC Sabathia, Phil Hughes and A.J. Burnett. New York is waiting to find out from Andy Pettitte whether he will pitch or retire; the Yankees also have promising Ivan Nova, a hard-throwing right-hander who turns 24 next month.

New York also held talks with Crawford before his agreement with the Red Sox, but never made an offer.

OL’ACES

From Page 28

onship trophy.

It was a very close match that fittingly concluded with a dramatic finish.

With just 15 seconds left on the clock and Ol’Aces ahead, 65-64, the Sonics poorly in-bounded the ball to midcourt where a swarm of Ol’Aces players batted it up in the air right into the grasp of Ol’Aces guard Ryan Ichihara.

With a one-point lead and the clock on his side, all Ichihara had to do was freeze and wait for the foul to come, but instead he elected to attempt an ill-advised pass to his right that flailed out of bounds.

This gave the ball back to the Sonics at midcourt with just under six seconds to play in regulation.

The Sonics managed to get the ball on their side of the court where Ecalnea found a good look at the basket at the buzzer, but his shot clanged off the rim

and time expired before the ball hit the ground.

Moments later, the Sonics were visibly shocked that they actually lost the game.

Granted, the pennant champs were a slight favorite in the matchup, and although the Sonics would not be nearly as open to admit it, the U19 division had four or five teams with potential to go all the way.

Moreover, although the Sonics were awarded the team sportsmanship trophy, the players did not appear interested in anything but the top billing.

In any rate, this probably made the victory that much sweeter for Ol’Aces, which simply got the job done on the day it really counted.

Maratita led Ol’Aces with 14 points, while Cadiang led four Sonics double-digit scorers with 13.

Notably, Maratita received most valuable player honors in the championship for his efforts.

In the U15 finals that preceded the main event, the younger

Sonics dominated all throughout the game to win it running away against a visibly over-matches Rollers A team.

Sonics guard Bryl Alegre delivered six points in the first eight minutes that helped establish a 13-8 lead as both teams were feeling each other out in the opening period.

The Rollers A’s offense then got stuffed again and was held to 10 points in the second quarter, as the Sonics pulled ahead 33-18 at the half.

Rollers A struggled all game against the Sonics’ pesky full court press.

After halftime, the Sonics vowed not to let up and contained Rollers A to a meager nine markers in the third quarter.

Jaymark De Guzman and Nevin Salem delivered five points apiece in the third for the Sonics as they opened a 25-point advantage, 50-27, heading into the final period.

Then despite 15 points from the Rollers A’s Erick Dela Rosa, the Sonics were not to be denied. They continued

with their defensive press all the way to the end and created more than enough turnovers to fluster their foes.

Josephus Aguilar came off the bench in the fourth quarter and led the Sonics with five points.

Notably, although the Rollers trailed by 19 points and never showed the ability to successfully work the ball to their end of the court, they still elected to foul in the final minute.

Although this decision was questionably disrespectful, the Sonics maintained their composure until the final horn and closed out the one-sided victory.

Alegre led the Sonics with 16 markers, while Rollers A’s Dela Rosa led all scorers with 18 in the loss.

First Game

Sonics 70 – Alegre 16, De Guzman 13, Salem 12, Aranda 10, Mizer 6, Andrew 4, Aguilar 3, Escalada 2, J. Villanueva 2.

Rollers A 53 – Dela Rosa 18, Mancao 9, Cholomay 8, Saurez 7, Macaranas 6, Orejola.

Hamilton, Rastguiy and company headed to Gisborne for the 2010 Poverty Bay East Coast Junior Open. The Dec. 12 to 17 tournament will be held at the PBEC Association Courts in Childers Road.

Her last stop will be the 2010 Auckland Christmas Tournament at the Scarbro Tennis Centre in 69 Merton Road, Auckland and the Manukau Tennis Centre in Manukau City.

Rastguiy’s last tournament in New Zealand will run from Dec. 17 to 23.

sort. Show-time is at 11:30am, while tee off is at 12:30pm. Greens fee is \$35 and prize pot fee is \$15.

For more information about Fil-Taga and its tournaments, call Mike Cruz at 483-7171, Mando Guban at 483-6033, Ted Malaran at 287-1227, Rene Batallones at 898-3367, George Sablan at 483-4530, or Larry Pascual at 287-1233.

the fastest qualifying time, world record, and championship marks in the event.

Also on Day 4, Villagomez will compete in the 50m backstroke where her qualifying time stands at 39.41 seconds. Gao has the fastest qualifying time at 25.92 seconds, while Croatia’s Sanja Jovanovic holds both the world (25.20 seconds) and championship (26.37 seconds) records.

On Sunday in the last day of the tournament, Kimball will race in the 200m freestyle where her qualifying time is at 2:26.89. Italy’s Federica Pellegrini owns the fastest qualifying time and world record in the 200m freestyle event at 1:15.17, while the United States’ Lindsay Benko holds the championship mark at 1:54.04.

The lean CNMI team left Saipan last Sunday for the Dubai meet, which will run until Dec. 19.

Scoring by quarters: 13-8, 33-18, 50-27, 70-53.

Second Game

Ol’Aces 65 – Maratita 14, Ogumoro 11, Tomokane 10, Lisua 8, Taylor 8, De Leon 6,

Ichihara 4, Webb 4.

Sonics 64 – Cadiang 13, Ecalnea 12, Galarse 12, Tudela 10, Villanueva 5, Palacios 4, Jeon 3, Sula 3, Salas 2.

Scoring by quarters: 10-14, 30-28, 45-47, 65-64.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	19	4	.826	—
New York	16	9	.640	4
Toronto	9	15	.375	10 1/2
Philadelphia	8	15	.348	11
New Jersey	6	18	.250	13 1/2

Southeast Division

Miami	18	8	.692	—
Orlando	16	8	.667	1
Atlanta	16	9	.640	1 1/2
Charlotte	8	15	.348	8 1/2
Washington	6	16	.273	10

Central Division

Chicago	15	8	.652	—
Indiana	11	12	.478	4
Milwaukee	10	13	.435	5
Cleveland	7	17	.292	8 1/2
Detroit	7	18	.280	9

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	20	3	.870	—
Dallas	19	5	.792	1 1/2
New Orleans	14	10	.583	6 1/2
Memphis	11	14	.440	10
Houston	9	14	.391	11

Northwest Division

Utah	18	8	.692	—
Oklahoma City	17	8	.680	1/2
Denver	14	9	.609	2 1/2
Portland	12	13	.480	5 1/2
Minnesota	6	18	.250	11

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	17	7	.708	—
Phoenix	11	12	.478	5 1/2
Golden State	8	16	.333	9
Sacramento	5	16	.238	10 1/2
L.A. Clippers	5	20	.200	12 1/2

Yesterday's Games

Miami 96, New Orleans 84

Chicago 92, Indiana 73

Memphis 86, Portland 73

Milwaukee 103, Dallas 99

Utah 108, Golden State 95

NBA LEADERS

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Durant, OKC	21	186	170	574	27.3
Bryant, LAL	24	219	169	640	26.7
Stoudemire, NYK	25	247	157	656	26.2
Rose, CHI	21	203	84	527	25.1
Nowitzki, DAL	23	220	115	575	25.0
Gordon, LAC	23	180	172	563	24.5
Ellis, GOL	23	216	96	560	24.3
James, MIA	25	204	167	605	24.2
Westbrook, OKC	25	197	186	589	23.6
Martin, HOU	23	147	190	533	23.2
Anthony, DEN	21	168	136	486	23.1
Wade, MIA	24	194	151	554	23.1
Williams, UTA	25	189	150	567	22.7
Howard, ORL	22	165	143	473	21.5
Bargnani, TOR	24	193	96	512	21.3
Beasley, MIN	22	190	70	468	21.3
Gay, MEM	24	196	83	508	21.2
Granger, IND	22	161	92	464	21.1
Love, MIN	24	165	131	493	20.5
Griffin, LAC	25	199	109	507	20.3

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Hilario, DEN	108	170	.635
Gasol, MEM	105	172	.610
Young, PHL	120	205	.585
Ibaka, OKC	107	183	.585
Odom, LAL	152	261	.582
Howard, ORL	165	286	.577
Horford, ATL	179	312	.574
Nowitzki, DAL	220	387	.568

McGee, WAS89157.567

Warrick, PHX91164.555

Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Love, MIN	24	116	259	375	15.6
Howard, ORL	22	63	202	265	12.0
Noah, CHI	22	91	174	265	12.0
Randolph, MEM	20	81	157	238	11.9
Griffin, LAC	25	97	200	297	11.9
Gasol, LAL	24	85	189	274	11.4
Camby, POR	24	80	184	264	11.0
Odom, LAL	24	56	178	234	9.8
Horford, ATL	25	64	179	243	9.7
Garnett, BOS	23	25	198	223	9.7

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Rondo, BOS	19	261	13.7
Nash, PHX	21	215	10.2
Paul, NOR	23	231	10.0
Williams, UTA	25	246	9.8
Wall, WAS	15	133	8.9
Kidd, DAL	23	203	8.8
Westbrook, OKC	25	219	8.8
Felton, NYK	25	218	8.7
Rose, CHI	21	171	8.1
Miller, POR	23	167	7.3

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
x-New England	11	2	0	.846	415	276
N.Y. Jets	9	4	0	.692	273	242
Miami	7	6	0	.538	225	244
Buffalo	3	10	0	.231	256	339

South

Jacksonville	8	5	0	.615	295	331
Indianapolis	7	6	0	.538	347	318
Houston	5	8	0	.385	316	355
Tennessee	5	8	0	.385	291	265

North

Pittsburgh	10	3	0	.769	290	198
Baltimore	9	4	0	.692	294	229
Cleveland	5	8	0	.385	235	252
Cincinnati	2	11	0	.154	262	345

West

Kansas City	8	5	0	.615	295	268
San Diego	7	6	0	.538	354	253
Oakland	6	7	0	.462	314	307
Denver	3	10	0	.231	269	376

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

N.Y. Giants	9	4	0	.692	329	250
Philadelphia	9	4	0	.692	374	308
Washington	5	8	0	.385	238	310
Dallas	4	9	0	.308	321	366

South

Atlanta	11	2	0	.846	335	243
New Orleans	10	3	0	.769	330	240
Tampa Bay	8	5	0	.615	260	267
Carolina	1	12	0	.077	164	338

North

Chicago	9	4	0	.692	253	228
Green Bay	8	5	0	.615	306	189
Minnesota	5	8	0	.385	230	274
Detroit	3	10	0	.231	285	309

West

Seattle	6	7	0	.462	261	329
St. Louis	6	7	0	.462	245	268
San Francisco	5	8	0	.385	243	280
Arizona	4	9	0	.308	243	351

x-clinched playoff spot

Yesterday's Games

N.Y. Giants 21, Minnesota 3

Baltimore 34, Houston 28, OT

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

RASTGUIY

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win over sixth-ranked Olivia McCormack, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3. For the third time in a row, Rastguiy cruised to a straight set win when she ousted Ponnampalam, 6-1, 6-2, to make it to the semifinals.

In the semis, the Whispering Palms student was pitted against second-seeded Janvhi Clark and Rastguiy played the toughest game so far in her

New Zealand trip. The Commonwealth’s junior player dropped the first set, 5-7, but stunned her ranked opponent in the last two sets, 6-4, 6-0, to gain a finals seat.

In the championship game, Rastguiy’s streak ended when she bowed to No. 3 seed Nina Paripovich, 2-6, 1-6. Paripovich marched into the finals after surviving top-seed Shaylee Syme in the semifinals in three sets, 1-6, 6-3, 6-2.

Despite Rastguiy’s loss in the finals, CNMI coach Jeff Race

was impressed with her ward’s performance in New Zealand.

“Negahr had a great first tournament in New Zealand. She made it to the finals and we are all very proud of her,” Race said in an email to *Saipan Tribune*.

Rastguiy is in New Zealand as a member of the Pacific Oceania Touring Team. She is one of the representatives of the North Pacific squad, joining Nadine Del Carmen of Guam and Palau’s Ayana Rengiil on the team.

After the tournament in

GAMBOA

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were Mando Guban (67), Lito Mendoza (67), Matutino Adony (69), Dennis Sebastian (71), Mike Cruz (72), Nazareno Ortiz (72), George Sablan Sr. (72), Freddie Cataluna (73), and Drandito Breboneria (74).

With Gamboa winning last

month’s tournament, he now qualifies for the 2010 Golfer of the Year award, which will be contested by the 12 monthly winners. Gamboa will battle the yearend plum against early qualifiers Joe Miranda and Breboneria (January), Joseph Fernandez (February), Jason Gatdula (March), Rommel Cruz (April), Ernie Lopez (May), Jacinto Ramones

(June), Vic Romana (July), Fr. Manny Corcuera (August), Rene Meimban (September), and Rene Batallones (October).

Only one slot is left for the battle for the 2010 Golfer of the Year award and it will be at stake this Sunday when Fil-Taga holds the December Ace tournament on the west course of the Laolao Bay Golf Re-

event each. Villagomez’s 200m backstroke qualifying time is 3:08.33. The fastest qualifying time in the 42-swimmer field is 2:02.67 and it belongs to France’s Alexienne Castel. Sakai (2:00.18) and Coventry (2:00.91) are the world and championship record-holders in the women’s 200m backstroke, respectively.

In the women’s 400m freestyle, Kimball’s qualifying time is 5:10.56. France’s Coralie Balmy holds the best qualifying time at 2:56.55, while Great Britain’s Joanne Jackson and Australia’s Kylie Palmer own the world (3:54.92) and championship records (3:59.23), respectively.

On Day 4, the two SSC swimmers will race in the 50m freestyle. Kimball’s qualifying time in the 50m freestyle is 30.81 seconds, while Villagomez’s is 34.76 seconds. The Netherlands swimmers own

entries with Kimball posting the 71st best qualifying time at 34.79 seconds and Villagomez at 74th (40.07 seconds). The Netherlands’ Inge Dekker and Hinkelien Schreuder hold the fastest qualifying time with their identical records of 25 seconds. Sweden’s Therese Alshammar is the event’s record holder (24.38 seconds), while Australia’s Felicity Galvez owns the championship mark (25.32 seconds).

In the 100m individual medley, which draws 70 entries, Kimball is ranked 64th (no qualifying time). Schreuder holds both the fastest qualifying time (57.85 seconds) and world record (57.74 seconds) in the event, while the United States’ Jenny Thompson has the championship record (59.30 seconds). The start list for the 100m freestyle has yet to be posted at press time.

On Day 3, Kimball and Villagomez will compete in one

KEANNA

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The competition in Dubai is the second biggest tournament

Tsunami Saipan Pentathlon Meet

Photos By ROSELYN B. MONROYO



Swimmers in the 100m backstroke plunge into the pool.



Three swimmers race in the 100m breaststroke event.



Two swimmers near the finish line for the 25m breaststroke event.



Angel De Jesus races in the 100m backstroke event.



A Tsunami Saipan swimmer plunges into the pool.



A swimmer nears completion of the 100m backstroke race.



A swimmer competes in the 100m freestyle race.



A Tsunami Saipan swimmer heads to the finish line for the 100m freestyle race.



A participant in the Tsunami Saipan Pentathlon Meet races in the 100m butterfly event at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi.



A Saipan Swim Club swimmer gasps for air during the 100m freestyle swim.



Fayre-less Vikings dominated by Giants

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Saipan Tribune Sports



Heat beat Hornets for 9th straight victory

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28 WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2010

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Ol'Aces, Sonics top youth caging

By WALTER SUTHERLAND
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REPORTER

Ol'Aces and Sonics took separate routes in claiming their respective U19 and U15 championships of the 2010 Saipan Rotary Club Youth Basketball League Monday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

In the U19 finals, Ol'Aces upset powerhouse Sonics, 65-64, in the nightcap, while the Sonics' U15 team walloped Rollers A, 70-53, in the curtain raiser to annex the crown and complete a perfect season.

In a back-and-forth U19 championship game, the Sonics' Jimmy Tudela and Tristan Ecalnea fired four points apiece in the opening period that helped the Sonics manage a 14-10 lead. Although Ol'Aces were held



Ol'Aces players, left, and Sonics players are all smiles after winning their respective winner-take-all U19 and U15 championship games in the 2010 Saipan Rotary Youth Basketball League Monday night at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

to only 10 markers in the first quarter, the game remained competitive and every possession counted.

Additionally, there were by far a lot more fans than usual present at the Ada Gym

to watch the twin championships.

A lot of hands got involved in the action for Ol'Aces as the team recovered in the second



period to take a one-basket lead, 30-28, at halftime.

However, after the break, the Sonics answered back and turned

the tables on Ol'Aces, 47-45, heading into the last quarter.

The Sonics' Melvin Cadiang led the charge with eight points in the third quarter, despite a string of eight points from Ol'Aces swingman Juan Maratita at the

start of the period.

Both teams displayed generous ball movement to find the open man, which showed that it really took a team effort to bring home the 2010 championship.

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Rastguiy enters finals in New Zealand

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER



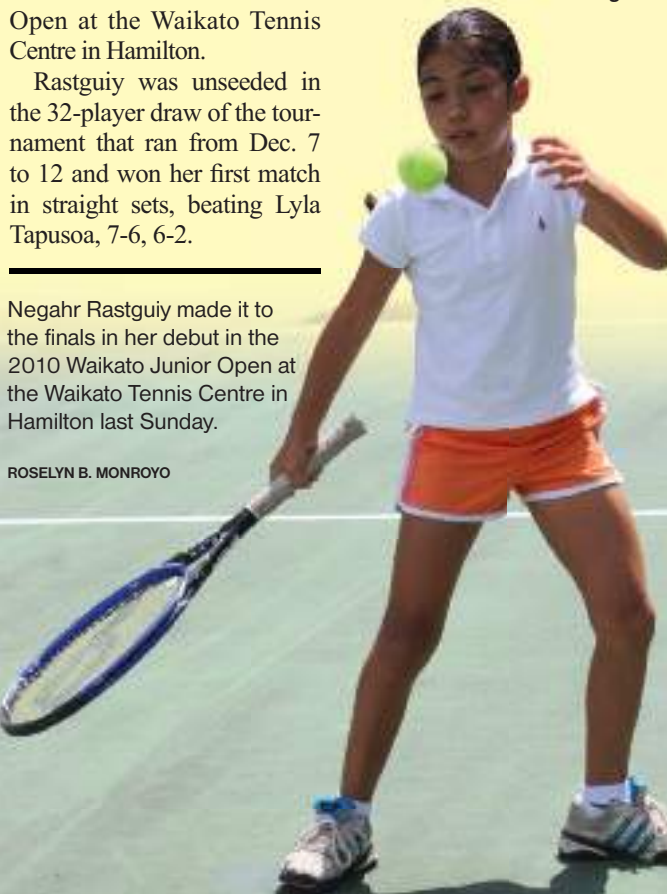
CNMI junior tennis player Negahr Rastguiy had a rousing debut in New Zealand, making it to the finals of the girls U12 division of the 2010 Waikato Junior Open at the Waikato Tennis Centre in Hamilton.

Rastguiy was unseeded in the 32-player draw of the tournament that ran from Dec. 7 to 12 and won her first match in straight sets, beating Lyla Tapusoa, 7-6, 6-2.

In the second round, the CNMI netter was paired against the fourth-seeded Tiana Windbuchler and Rastguiy nailed another straight set win, 6-3, 6-3, to advance to the quarterfinals.

Rastguiy's quarterfinals foe was Annalakshmi Ponnampalam, who came off an upset

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Negahr Rastguiy made it to the finals in her debut in the 2010 Waikato Junior Open at the Waikato Tennis Centre in Hamilton last Sunday.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Gamboa gains Fil-Taga November Ace

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Greg Gamboa bested 28 other golfers to top the Fil-Taga November Ace tournament held late last month at Coral Ocean Point.

The 27-handicapper Gamboa carded a net 65 for a one-stroke win over Ronnie Santos. Gamboa had a 48 on the front and played better on the back with a 44 for a gross 92.

Gamboa won \$300 for ruling the November Ace, which also doubled as Fil-Taga Golfers Association's Turkey Shoot-

out thus the monthly winner had an additional cash prize of \$150, besides the monthly purse of \$150.

Santos settled for the runner-up honors after shooting a net 66. The 17-handicapper had a 2-over par 38 in the first nine holes and improved his game in the last nine with a 1-under par 35 for a gross 83. Though he finished second in the low net category, Santos posted the best score in the gross division.

Rounding out the Top 10

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Greg Gamboa, right, won the Fil-Taga November Ace tournament held late last month at Coral Ocean Point.

Keanna debuts in Dubai today

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

CNMI's Keanna Villagomez will plunge into action today at the start of the 10th FINA World Swimming Championships in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Villagomez will be racing in the 100m backstroke event during the morning session of the competition (Wednesday afternoon on Saipan) at the 25-meter pool of the Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Sports Complex.

The 17-year-old swimmer is one of the 64 swimmers en-

tered in the women's 100m backstroke and holds a qualifying time of one minute, 25.47 seconds. China's Chang Gao has the fastest qualifying time in the field at 55.48 seconds, while Japan's Shiho Sakai (55.23 second) and Zimbabwe's Kirsty Coventry (57.10 seconds) own the world and championship records, respectively, in the women's 100m backstroke.

Villagomez is one of the only two Micronesian swimmers entered in the 100m backstroke. The other one is Palau's Osi-sang Chilton.

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Keanna Villagomez, seen here in a local race early this year, will debut in the 10th FINA World Swimming Championships in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, today.